

SERMONS,

ON THE

Following SUBJECTS;

The Manner in which Salvation is to be sought.	ing and conversion of Sinners.
The unreasonableness of Indetermination in Religion.	Hypocrites deficient in the Duty of Prayer.
Unbelievers condemn the glory of CHRIST.	The future Punishment of the wicked unavoidable and intolerable.
The folly of looking back in fleeing out of Sodom.	The <i>eternity</i> of hell-torments.
The Warnings of Scripture in the best Manner adapted to the awaken-	The Peace which CHRIST gives his true Followers.
	The perpetuity & change of the Sabbath.

BY THE LATE REVEREND

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HARTFORD:

PRINTED BY HUDSON AND GOODWIN.

M.DCC.LXXX.



P R E F A C E.

*I*T is now about a year and an half, since I was desired by the General Association of Ministers in this State to publish the following sermons. As the publication has been so long delayed, I look upon myself bound to render the reasons of this delay to the public in general, to the association and subscribers in particular.—At the time that the desire of the association was made known to me, the state of our currency was such, that I could not immediately determine, in what manner it was best to set on foot the subscription. This being at length determined, the papers could not be circulated, subscriptions procured and returned in a shorter time than several months. After this a further delay was occasioned by the difficulty of procuring paper. However this difficulty was also at last surmounted, and the printer had begun the work, when on the fifth of July last, the British troops made their descent on New-Haven. This event entirely broke up the work; and as we have been constantly exposed to another visit from the enemy, the printer did not judge it prudent to resume it. Things being so circumstanced, I was obliged to seek out for another printer; and those at Hartford being most conveniently situated, I applied to them. They were willing to undertake the business, but having work already in hand which would necessarily consume several months, they could not begin this, till the present time; but will now enter on it immediately, and dispatch it as fast as possible.—By this peculiar series

of events, the publication of these sermons, hath been thus, long deferred.

As to the sermons themselves, they were not transcribed with any view to a publication in this country. In the year 1773, I was desired by a gentleman in Scotland, to transcribe a number of the author's sermons on some of the most plain, practical and experimental subjects, that they might be printed there. The reader will hence see, that it was not the design to pick out the most curious and elaborate discourses, but those of a different stamp. Among the very numerous discourses on practical and experimental subjects, out of which I was to choose, it was no easy task, to determine which to publish, and which to omit. And different persons would no doubt, in this case, judge differently. Many sermons equally worthy of the light as these, were omitted; and perhaps some that were more worthy. Yet it is hoped that the public will judge these not unworthy of their acceptance and attention; if so, that may lay a foundation for the publication of others in due time.

The reader cannot be insensible of the disadvantages attending all posthumous works, especially sermons, which are generally prepared only for the next sabbath, and for a particular congregation, and often in great haste and amidst many avocations. Yet if in these sermons he shall find the most important truths exhibited, and pressed home on the conscience with that pungency which tends to awaken, convince, humble and edify; if he shall find that serious strain of piety, which in spite of himself, forces upon him, a serious frame of mind; if in the perusal he cannot but be ashamed and alarmed at himself, and in some measure feel the reality and weight of eternal things; if at least, he like Agrippa shall be almost persuaded to be a christian:----- I presume he will not grudge the expence of the purchase, nor the time requisite to peruse what is now offered him. These if I mistake not, are the great ends to be aimed at in

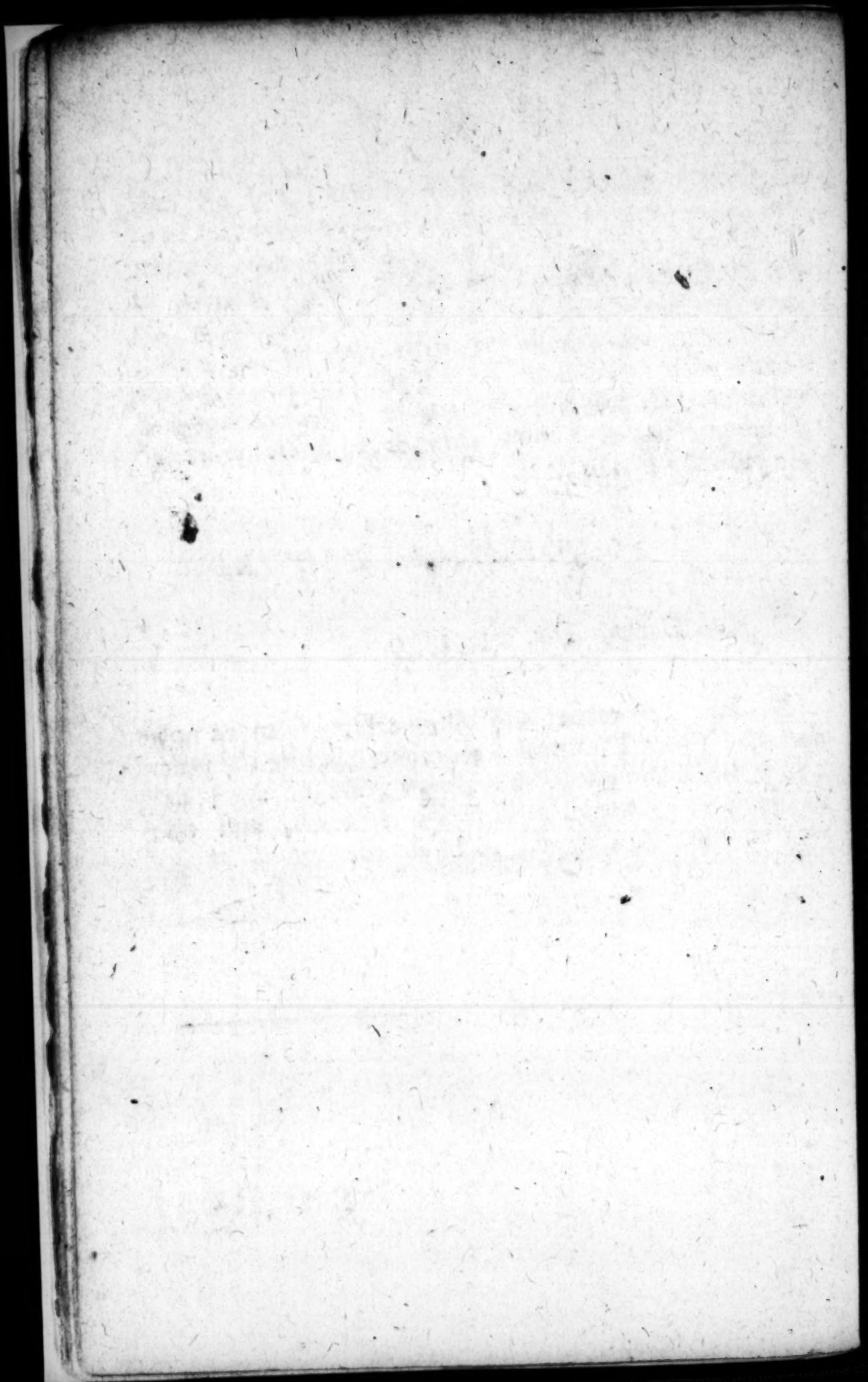
all sermons, whether preached or printed ; and are ends which can never be accomplished by those modern fashionable discourses which are delivered under the name of sermons, but really are mere harangues on such moral subjects, as have been much better handled by Cicero, Seneca, or the Spectator ; and contain very little more of the gospel, than is to be found in the heathen philosophers.---That the important ends now mentioned may be indeed accomplished by this publication to every reader, is the sincere desire of the publick's humble-servant,

JONATHAN EDWARDS,

New-Haven, Dec. 21, 1779.

N. B. The reader will observe some sermons not dated. Those I suppose were written before the year 1733, when the author was thirty years of age ; as in that year he began to date his sermons, and all written after that, appear to be dated.

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S E R M O N * I.

The Manner in which the Salvation of
the Soul is to be fought.

G E N E S I S, vi. 22.

*Thus did NOAH; according to all that GOD commanded
him, so did he.*

CONCERNING these words I would observe
three things.

1. **WHAT** it was that GOD commanded Noah, to which these words refer. It was the building of an ark according to the particular direction of GOD, against the time when the flood of waters should come; and the laying up of food for himself, his family, and the other animals, which were to be preserved in the ark. We have the particular commands which GOD gave him respecting this affair, from the 19th v. Make thee an ark of Gopher wood, &c.

2. **WE** may observe the *special design* of the work, which GOD had enjoined upon Noah: It was to save himself and his family, when the rest of the world should be drowned. See v. 17, 18.

3. **WE**

3. We may observe Noah's obedience. He obeyed God : *Thus did Noah.* And his obedience was thorough and universal : *According to ALL, that GOD commanded him, so did he.* He not only began, but he went through this work, which God had commanded him to undertake for his salvation from the flood. To this obedience the apostle refers in the 11th ch. of Heb. 7th v. By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.

D O C T R I N E.

WE should be willing to engage in, and go through with great undertakings, in order to our own salvation.

THE building of the ark, which was enjoined upon Noah, that he and his family might be saved, was a great undertaking : The ark was a building of vast size ; the length of it being three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A cubit, till of late, was by learned men reckoned to be equal to a foot and an half of our measure. But lately some learned men of our nation have travelled into Egypt, and other antient countries, and have measured some antient buildings there, which are of several thousand years standing, and of which antient histories give us the dimensions in cubits ; particularly the pyramids of Egypt, which are standing entire at this day. By measuring these, and by comparing the measure in feet, with the antient accounts of their measure in cubits, a cubit is found to be almost two and twenty inches. Therefore learned men more lately reckon a cubit much longer than they did formerly. So that the ark reckon-
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ed so much longer every way, will appear to be almost of double the bulk, which was formerly ascribed to it. According to this computation of the cubit, it was more than five hundred and fifty feet long, about ninety feet broad, and about fifty feet in height.

To build such a structure, with all those apartments and divisions in it which were necessary, and in such a manner as to be fit to float upon the water, for so long a time, was a great undertaking. It was a work of much time, taking Noah with all the workmen he employed an hundred and twenty years, or thereabouts, to build it. For so long it was, that the spirit of God strove, and the long-suffering of God waited on the old world; as you may see in Gen. vi. 3. My spirit shall not always strive with man; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years. All this while the ark was a preparing, as appears by 1 Pet. iii. 20. When once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing. It was a long time that Noah constantly employed himself in this business. Men would esteem that undertaking very great, which should keep them constantly employed even for one half of that time.

NOAH must have had a great and constant care upon his mind for these one hundred and twenty years, in superintending this work, and seeing that all was done exactly according to the directions, which God had given him.

Not only was Noah himself continually employed, but it is judged by learned men from the computations which they have made, that it required a great number of workmen to be constantly employed, during all that time, in procuring, and collecting, and fitting the materials, and in putting them together in

due form. How great a thing was it for Noah to undertake such a work, which kept him and so many others busily employed for so long a time ! For beside the continual care and labour, it was a work of vast expence. It is not probable that any of that wicked generation would put to a finger to help forward such a work, which doubtless they believed was merely the fruit of Noah's folly, without full wages. Noah must needs have been very rich, to be able to bear the expence of such a work, and to pay so many workmen for so long a time. It would have been a very great expence for a prince ; and doubtless Noah was very rich, as Abraham and Job were afterwards. But it is probable that Noah spent all his worldly substance in this work, thus manifesting his faith in the word of God, by selling all he had ; as believing there would surely come a flood, which would destroy all ; so that if he should keep what he had, it would be of no service to him. Herein he has set us an example, shewing us how we ought to sell all for our salvation.

NOAH'S undertaking was an undertaking of great difficulty, as it exposed him to the continual reproaches of all his neighbours, for that whole one hundred and twenty years. None of them believed what he told them of a flood which was about to drown the world, as this was a thing the like of which had never been from the beginning of the world to that time. For a man to undertake such a vast piece of work, under a notion that it should be the means of saving him, when the world should be destroyed, it made him the continual laughing stock of the world. When he was about to hire workmen, doubtless all laughed at him, and we may suppose that though the workmen consented to work for wages,

ges, yet they laughed at the folly of him who employed them. When the ark was begun, we may suppose that every one that passed by and saw such an huge hulk stand there, laughed at it, calling it *Noah's folly*.

In these days men are with difficulty brought to do or submit to that which makes them the objects of the reproach of all their neighbours. Indeed if while some reproach them, others stand by them and honour them, this will support them. But it is very difficult for a man to go on in a way, wherein he makes himself the laughing stock of the whole world, and wherein he can find none who do not despise him. Where is the man that can stand the shock of such a trial for twenty years? Much more may I ask, where shall he be found, who will stand it for one hundred and twenty years?

BUT in such an undertaking as this Noah at the divine direction engaged, and went through it, that himself and his family might be saved from that common destruction, which was shortly about to come on the world. He began, and also made an end: According to all that God commanded him, so did he. Length of time did not weary him: He did not grow weary of his vast expence. He stood the shock of the derision of all his neighbours, and of all the world, year after year: He did not grow weary of being their laughing stock, so as to give over his enterprize; but persevered in it, till the ark was finished. After this, he was at the trouble and charge of procuring stores for the maintenance of his family, and of all the various kinds of creatures for so long a time. Such an undertaking he engaged in and went through in order to a *temporal* salvation. How great an undertaking then should men
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be willing to engage in and go through in order to their *eternal* salvation ! A salvation from an eternal deluge ; from being overwhelmed with the billows of God's wrath, of which Noah's flood was but a shadow.

BUT I shall particularly handle this doctrine under the three following propositions.

I. THERE is a work or business, which must be undertaken and accomplished by men, if they would be saved.

II. THIS business is a great undertaking.

III. MEN should be willing to enter upon and go through this undertaking ; though it be great, seeing it is for their own salvation.

I. PROP. There is a work or business, which men must enter upon and accomplish, in order to their salvation.—Men have no reason to expect to be saved in idleness, or to go to heaven in a way of doing nothing. No ; in order to it, there is a great work, which must not only be begun, but must be finished.

I SHALL speak upon this proposition, in answer to two enquiries.

ENQ. I. What is this work or business, which must be undertaken and accomplished in order to the salvation of men ?

ANS. It is the work of seeking salvation in a way of a thorough and constant observance of all the duty, to which GOD directs us in his word. If we would be saved, we must seek salvation. For although men do not obtain heaven of themselves, yet they do not go thither accidentally, or without any intention

tion or endeavours of their own. God in his word hath directed men to seek their salvation as they would hope to obtain it. There is a race that is set before them, which they must run, and in that race come off victors, in order to their winning the prize.

THE scriptures have told us what particular duties must be performed by us, in order to our salvation. It is not sufficient that men seek their salvation only in the observance of some of those duties ; but they must be observed universally. The work we have to do, is not an obedience only to some, but to all the commands of God ; a compliance with every institution of worship ; a diligent use of all the appointed means of grace ; a doing of all duty towards God and towards man.—It is not sufficient that men have some respect to all the commands of God, and that they may be said to seek their salvation in some sort of observance of all the commands ; but they must be *devoted* to it. They must not make this a business by the *by*, or a thing in which they are negligent and careless, or which they do with a slack hand ; but it must be their great business, being attended to as their great concern. They must not only seek, but strive ; they must do what their hand findeth to do with their might, as men thoroughly engaged in their minds, and influenced and set forward by great desire and strong resolution. They must act as those that see so much of the importance of the things of religion above all other things, that every thing else must be as an occasional affair, and nothing must stand in competition with the duties of religion. This must be the one thing they do ; Phil. iii. 13. This one thing I do.—It must be the business to which they are given up, which they follow daily as their great work, to which they make all

all other affairs give place, and to which they are ready to make other things a sacrifice. They must be ready to part with pleasures, and honor, and estate, and life, and to sell all that they may successfully accomplish this business.

It is required of every man, that he not only do something in this business, but that he should *devote* himself to it, which implies that he should give up himself to it, give up all his affairs, and all his temporal enjoyments. This is the import of taking up the cross, of taking CHRIST's yoke upon us, and of denying ourselves to follow CHRIST. The rich young man, who came kneeling to CHRIST, to know what he should do to be saved (Mark x. 17.) in some sense sought salvation, but did not obtain it. He in some sense kept all the commands from his youth up; but he was not cordially devoted to this business. He had not made a sacrifice to it of all his enjoyments, as appeared when CHRIST came to try him; he would not part with his estate for him.

It is not only necessary that men should seem to be very much engaged, and appear as if they were devoted to their duty for a little while; but there must be a *constant* devotedness; they must be devoted to this work in a persevering way, as Noah was to the business of building the ark, going on with that great, difficult, and expensive affair, and holding out through the one hundred and twenty years, till it was finished, and till the flood came.----Men must not only be diligent in the use of the means of grace, and be anxiously engaged to escape eternal ruin, till they obtain hope and comfort; but afterwards they must persevere in the duties of religion, till the flood come, the flood of death.——Not only must the faculties, strength, and possessions of men be

be devoted to this work ; but also their time and their lives : They must give up their whole lives to it, even to the very day when God causes it to rain on the earth, and the storms and floods come. This is the work or business, which men have to do, in order to their salvation.

ENQ. 2. Why is it needful that men should undertake to go through such a work in order to their salvation ?

ANS. 1. Negatively ; not to merit salvation, or to recommend them to the saving mercy of God. Men are not saved on the account of any work of theirs, and yet they are not saved without works. If we merely consider what it is for which, or on the account of which men are saved, no work at all in men is necessary to their salvation. In this respect they are saved wholly without any work of theirs. Tit. iii. 5. Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

IF we enquire what we must be saved on the account of, the answer is on the account of works : but not our own works, not on the account of any works which we have done or can do ; but on the account of the works which CHRIST hath done for us. Works are the fixed price of eternal life, fixed in the beginning when God made man. And God hath never altered that price : it is fixed by an eternal, unalterable rule of righteousness. But since the fall there is no hope of our doing these works. As to us salvation is offered freely without money and without price. It is offered to be made sure to us, upon the sole condition of our acceptance of it. Whosoever will, may come and take of the water of life freely.

2. Ans.

2. AFFIRMATIVELY ; this is the way to salvation which GOD hath appointed. Though it be not needful that we do any thing to merit salvation, which CHRIST hath fully merited for all who believe in him ; or that we should do any thing, for which, or on the account of the goodness of which we may be saved ; yet GOD for wise and holy ends hath appointed, that we should come to salvation in no other way, but that of good works done by us.

GOD did not save Noah on account of the labour and expence he was at in building the ark. Noah's salvation from the flood was an instance of the free and distinguishing mercy of GOD. Nor did GOD stand in need of Noah's care, or cost, or labour to build an ark. The same power, which created the world, and which brought the flood of waters upon the earth, could have made the ark in an instant, without any care or cost of Noah, or any of the labour of those many workmen, who were employed for so long a time. Yet GOD was pleased to appoint, that Noah should be saved in this way.----So GOD hath appointed that man should not be saved, without his undertaking and doing this work, of which I have been speaking ; and therefore we are commanded *to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling*, Philip. ii. 12.

THERE are many wise ends to be answered by the establishment of such a work or business as pre-requisite to salvation.-----The glory of GOD required it. For although GOD stands in no need of any thing that men do, to recommend them to his saving mercy ; yet it would reflect much on the glory of GOD's wisdom and holiness, to bestow salvation on men in such a way as tends to encourage them in sloth and wickedness ; or in any other way than that
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which tends to promote diligence and holiness. Man was made capable of action, with many powers of both body and mind fitting him for it. He was made for business and not idleness: and the main business for which he was made, was the business of religion. Therefore it becometh the wisdom of God to bestow salvation and happiness on men, in such a way as tends most to promote his answering his end in this respect, and to stir him up to a diligent use of his faculties and talents.

It becometh the wisdom of God so to order it, that things of great value and importance should not be obtained without great labour and diligence. God hath wisely so ordered in other things. So much as human learning and great moral accomplishments are not to be obtained, without much care and labour. It is wisely so ordered to maintain in man a due sense of the value of those things which are excellent. If great things were in common easily to be obtained, it would have a tendency to cause men to slight and undervalue them. Men commonly despise those things, which are cheap, and which are obtained without difficulty.

ALTHOUGH the work which hath been spoken of, performed by men, be not necessary in order to merit salvation; yet it is necessary in order to their being prepared for it. This is one reason why God appointed it as absolutely requisite in order to it. Men cannot be prepared for salvation, without seeking it in such a way as hath been described. This is necessary in order that they have a proper sense of their own necessities, and unworthiness; and in order that they be prepared and disposed to prize salvation, when bestowed, and that they be properly thankful to God for it. The requisition of so great a work in order

order to our salvation is no way inconsistent with the freedom of the offer of salvation; as after all, it is both offered and bestowed without any respect to our work, as the price or meritorious cause of our salvation, as I have already explained. Besides, salvation bestowed in this way is better for us, more for our advantage and happiness, both in this and the future world, than if it were given without this requisition.

II. PROP. This work or business, which must be done in order to the salvation of men, is a great undertaking. It often appears so to men upon whom it is urged. Utterly to break off from all their sins, and to give up themselves for ever to the business of religion, without making a reserve of any one lust, submitting to and complying with every command of God, in all cases, and persevering therein; appears to many so great a thing, that they are in vain urged to undertake it. In so doing it seems to them, that they should give up themselves to a perpetual bondage and even throw themselves away. The greater part of men therefore choose to put it off, and keep it at as great a distance as they can. They cannot bear to think of entering immediately on such an hard service, and rather than do it, they will run the risk of eternal damnation, by putting it off to an uncertain future opportunity.

ALTHOUGH the business of religion is far from really being as it appears to such men; for the devil will be sure, if he can, to represent it in false colours to sinners, and make it appear as black and terrible as he can; yet it is indeed a great business, a great undertaking; and it is fit that all, who are urged to it, should count the cost beforehand, and be sensible of the difficulty attending it. For though the devil discourages many from this undertaking, by repre-
senting

presenting it to be more difficult than it really is ; yet with others he takes a contrary course, and flatters them it is a very easy thing, a trivial business, which may be done at any time, when they please ; and so emboldens them to defer it from that consideration. But let none imagine any other or conceive any other notion of that business of religion, which is absolutely necessary to their salvation, than that it is a great undertaking. It is so in the following accounts.

1. It is a business of great labour and care. There are many commands to be obeyed, many duties to be done, duties to God, duties to our neighbour, and duties to ourselves. There is much opposition in the way of these duties from *without*. There is a subtil and powerful adversary laying all manner of blocks in the way. There are innumerable temptations of satan to be resisted and repelled. There is great opposition from the world ; innumerable snares laid on every side ; many rocks and mountains to be passed over, many streams to be passed through, and many flatteries and enticements from a vain world to be resisted. There is great opposition from *within* ; a dull and sluggish heart, which is exceeding averse from that activity in religion, which is necessary ; a carnal heart, which is averse from religion and spiritual exercises, and continually drawing the contrary way ; and a proud and a deceitful heart, in which corruption will be exerting itself in all manner of ways. So that nothing can be done to any effect without a most strict and careful watch, great labour and strife.

2. It is a constant business.---In that business which requires great labour, men love now and then to have a space of relaxation, that they may rest from their extraordinary labour. But this is a business which must be followed every day. Luke ix. 23.

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross *daily*, and follow me. We must never give ourselves any relaxation from this business; it must be continually prosecuted day after day. If sometimes we make a great stir and bustle concerning religion, but then lay all aside to take our ease, and do so from time to time; it will be of no good effect; we had e'en as good do nothing at all. The business of religion so followed is never like to come to any good issue, nor is the work ever like to be accomplished to any good purpose.

3. It is a great undertaking, as it is an undertaking of great expense.---We must therein sell all; we must follow this business at the expense of all our unlawful pleasures and delights, at the expense of our carnal ease, often at the expense of our substance, of our credit among men, the good will of our neighbours, at the expense of all our earthly friends, and even at the expense of life itself.---Herein it is like Noah's undertaking to build the ark, which as hath been shown was a costly undertaking: it was expensive to his reputation among men, exposing him to be the continual laughing stock of all his neighbours and of the whole world; and it was expensive to his estate, and probably cost him all that he had.

4. SOMETIMES the fear, trouble and exercise of mind, which are undergone respecting this business, and the salvation of the soul, are great and long continued, before any comfort is obtained. Sometimes persons in this situation labour long in the dark, and sometimes, as it were, in the very fire, they having great distress of conscience, great fears, and many perplexing temptations, before they obtain light and comfort to lighten their business, and make their care and labour more easy to them. They sometimes earnestly and for a long time seek comfort, but find it not, because they

they seek it not in a right manner, nor in the right objects. God therefore hides his face. They cry, but God doth not answer their prayers. They strive, but all seems in vain. They seem to themselves not at all to get forward, or nearer to a deliverance from sin; but to go backward rather than forward. They see no glimmerings of light: things rather appear darker and darker. Insomuch that they are often ready to be discouraged, and to sink under the weight of their present distress, and under the prospect of future misery. In this situation, and under these views, some are almost driven to despair.

MANY after they have obtained some saving comfort, are again involved in darkness and trouble. It is with them as it was with the christian Hebrews, of whom we read Heb. x. 32. After ye were illuminated ye endured a great fight of afflictions. Some through a melancholy habit and distemper of body, together with satan's temptations, spend a great part of their lives in distress and darkness, even after they have had some saving comfort.

5. It is a business, which by reason of the many difficulties, snares and dangers that attend it, requires much instruction, consideration and counsel. There is no business wherein men stand in need of counsel more than in this. It is a difficult undertaking, an hard matter to proceed aright in it. There are ten thousand wrong ways, which men may take; there are many labyrinths wherein many poor souls are entangled and never find the way out; there are many rocks on which thousands of souls have suffered shipwreck, for want of having steered aright.

MEN of themselves know not how to proceed in this business, any more than the children of Israel in the wilderness know where to go without the guidance

blance of the pillar of cloud and fire. There is great need that they search the scriptures and give diligent heed to the instructions and directions contained in them as to a light shining in a dark place; and that they ask counsel of those skilled in these matters. And there is no business in which men have so much need of seeking to God by prayer, for his counsel, and that he would lead them in the right way and show them the strait gate. For strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Yea there are none that find it without direction from heaven.

THE building of the ark was a work of great difficulty on this account, that Noah's wisdom was not sufficient to direct him, how to make such a building, as should be a sufficient security against such a flood, and which should be a convenient dwelling place for himself, his family and all the various kinds of beasts and birds, and creeping things. Nor could he ever have known how to construct this building, had not God directed him.

6. THIS business never ends till life ends. They that undertake this laborious, careful expensive, self denying business must not expect to rest from their labours, till death shall have put an end to them. The long continuance of the work which Noah undertook was what especially made it a great undertaking. This also was what made the travel of the children of Israel through the wilderness appear so great to them, that it was continued for so long a time. Their spirits failed, they were discouraged, and had not an heart to go through with so great an undertaking.

BUT such is this business that it runs parallel with life, whether it be longer or shorter. Although we should

should live to a great age, our race and warfare will not be finished, till death shall come. We must not expect that an end will be put to our labour, and care, and strife by any hope of a good estate, which we may obtain. Past attainments, and past success will not excuse us from what remains for the future, nor will they make future, constant labour and care not necessary to our salvation.

III. MEN should be willing to engage in and go through this business, however great and difficult it may seem to them, seeing it is for their own salvation. — Because,

I. A DELUGE of wrath will surely come. The inhabitants of the old world would not believe that there would come such a flood of waters upon the earth, as that of which Noah told them, though he told them often ; neither would they take any care to avoid the destruction. Yet such a deluge did come ; nothing of all those things, of which Noah had forewarned them, failed.

So there will surely come a more dreadful deluge of divine wrath on this wicked world. We are often forewarned of it in the scriptures, and the world is as the world was then, it doth not believe any such thing. Yet the threatening will as certainly be accomplished, as the threatening denounced against the old world. A day of wrath is coming ; it will come at its appointed season ; it will not tarry, it shall not be delayed one moment beyond its appointed time.

2. ALL such as do not seasonably undertake and go through that great work, which has been spoken of, will surely be swallowed up in this deluge. When the floods of wrath shall come, they will universally overwhelm the wicked world : all such as shall not have taken care to prepare an ark ; will surely

surely be swallowed up in it : they will find no other way of escape. In vain shall salvation be expected from the hills and from the multitude of mountains. For the flood shall be above the tops of all the mountains. If they shall climb up the tops of the mountains, thence shall they be brought down ; for the waters will rise above their heads. Or if they shall hide themselves in the caves and dens of the mountains, there the waters of the flood will find them out, will come in upon them, fill up those caves, and there shall they miserably perish.

As those of the old world that were not in the ark perished, agreeab'y to Gen. vii. 21. 22. 23. So all who shall not have secured to themselves a place in the spiritual ark of the gospel, shall perish much more miserably than the old world.-----Doubtless the inhabitants of the old world had many contrivances to save themselves. Some we may suppose ascended to the tops of their houses, being driven out of one story to another, till at last they perished in the highest story. Others climed to the tops of high towers ; who yet were washed thence by the boisterous waves of the rising flood. Some climed to the tops of trees ; others to the tops of mountains, and especially of the highest mountains. But all was in vain ; the flood sooner or later swallowed them all up : only Noah and his family, who had taken care to prepare an ark, remained alive.

So it will doubtless be at the end of the world, when CHRIST shall come to judge the world in righteousness. Some, when they shall look up and see him coming in the clouds of heaven, shall hide themselves in closets, and secret places in their houses. Others flying to the caves and dens of the earth, shall attempt to hide themselves there. Others shall call upon the rocks and mountains to fall on them,

and

and cover them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb.-----So it will be after the sentence is pronounced and wicked men see that terrible fire a coming, which is to burn this world for ever, and which will be a deluge of fire, and will burn the earth even to the bottoms of the mountains, and to its very centre, agreeably to Deut. xxxii. 22. For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. I say, when the wicked shall, after the sentence, see this great fire coming and beginning to kindle, and to take hold of this earth; there will be many contrivances devised by them to escape: some flying to caves and holes in the earth, some hiding themselves in one place, and some in another. But let them hide themselves where they will, or let them do what they will, it will be utterly in vain. Every cave shall burn as an oven, the rocks and mountains shall melt with fervent heat; and if they could creep down to the very centre of the earth, still the heat would follow them, and rage with as much vehemence there, as on the very surface.

So when wicked men, who neglect their great work in their lifetime, who are not willing to go through the difficulty and labour of this work, draw near to death, they sometimes do many things to escape death, and put forth many endeavours to lengthen out their lives at least a little longer. For this end they send for physicians, and perhaps many are consulted, and their prescriptions are punctually observed. Beside these things, they also use many endeavours to save their souls from hell. They cry to God; they confess their past sins; they promise future reformation; and, O, what would they not

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give

give for some small addition to their lives, or some hope of future happiness. But all proves in vain; God hath numbered their days and finished them; and as they have sinned away the day of grace, they must even bear the consequence, and for ever lie down in sorrow.

3. THE destruction, when it shall come, will be infinitely terrible. The destruction of the old world by the flood was terrible. But that eternal destruction, which is coming on the wicked is infinitely more terrible. That flood of waters was but an image of this awful flood of divine vengeance. When the waters poured down out of heaven, more like spouts or cataracts, or the waters pouring down the falls of a great river, than like rain; it was very terrifying. When the windows of heaven were opened and the waters were poured down in torrents or cataracts, what an awful appearance was there of the wrath of God. This however is but an image of that terrible out-pouring of the wrath of God, which shall be forever, yea forever and ever, on wicked men. And when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the waters burst forth out of the ground, as though they had issued out of the womb, as it is expressed in Job xxxviii. 8. This was an image of the mighty breakings forth of God's wrath, which shall be, when the flood-gates of wrath shall be drawn up. How may we suppose that the wicked of the old world repented, that they had not hearkened to the warnings which Noah had given them, when they saw these dreadful things, and saw that they must perish! How much more will you repent your refusing to hearken to the gracious warnings of the gospel, when you shall see the fire of God's wrath against you, pouring down from heaven and bursting on all sides out of the bowels of the earth!

4. THOUGH

4. **THOUGH** the work which is necessary in order to man's salvation be a great work, yet it is not impossible. What was required of Noah, doubtless appeared a very great and difficult undertaking. Yet he undertook it with resolution, and he was carried through it. So if we undertake this work with the same goodwill and resolution, we shall undoubtedly be successful. However difficult it be, yet multitudes have gone through it, and have obtained salvation by the means. It is not a work beyond what we are capable of by the faculties of our nature, nor beyond the opportunities, which God giveth us. If men will but take warning and hearken to counsel, they will but be sincere and in good earnest, be seasonable in their work, take their opportunities, use their advantages, be steadfast and not wavering; they shall not fail.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

THE use I would make of this doctrine is to exhort all to undertake and go through this great work, which they have to do in order to their salvation, and this, let the work seem ever so great and difficult. If your nature be averse to it, and there seems to be very frightful things in the way, so that your heart is ready to fail at the prospect; yet seriously consider what has been said, and act a wise part. Seeing it is for yourselves, for your own salvation; seeing it is for so great a salvation, for your deliverance from eternal destruction; and seeing it is of such absolute necessity in order to your salvation, that the deluge of divine wrath will come and there will be no escaping it, without preparing an ark; is it not best for you to undertake the work, engage in it

it with your might, and go through it, though this cannot be done without great labour, care, difficulty, and expense ?

I WOULD by no means flatter you concerning this work, or go about to make you believe, that you shall find an easy, light business of it : No, I would not have you expect any such thing. I would have you sit down and count the cost ; and if you cannot find it in your hearts, to engage in a great, hard, laborious and expensive undertaking, and to persevere in it to the end of life ; pretend not to be religious. Indulge yourselves in your ease ; follow your pleasures ; eat, drink and be merry ; e'en conclude to go to hell in that way, and never make any more pretences of seeking your salvation. Here consider several things in particular.

1. How often you have been warned of the approaching flood of God's wrath. How frequently have you been told of hell, have heard the threatenings of the word of God set before you, and have been warned to flee from the wrath to come. It is with you, as it was with the inhabitants of the old world. Noah warned them abundantly of the approaching flood, and counselled them to take care for their safety. 1 Pet. iii. 19. 20.—Noah warned them in words ; and not only so, he preached to them and warned them in his actions. His building the ark, which took him so long a time, and in which he employed so many hands, was a standing warning to them. All the blows of the hammer and ax, during the progress of that building, were so many calls and warnings to the old world, to take care for their preservation from the approaching destruction. Every knock of the workmen was a knock of JESUS CHRIST at the door of their hearts. But they would not hearken

hearken : all these warnings, though repeated every day and continued for so long a time, availed nothing.

Now is it not much so with you, as it was with them ? How often have you been warned ? how have you heard the warning knocks of the gospel, sabbath after sabbath for these many years ? Yet how have some of you no more regarded them, than the inhabitants of the old world regarded the noise of the workmen's tools in Noah's ark !

OBJECTION. But here possibly it may be objected by some, that though it be true, they have often been told of hell, yet they never saw any thing of it, and therefore they cannot realize it, that there is any such place. They have often heard of hell, and are told that wicked men, when they die, go to a most dreadful place of torment ; that hereafter there will be a day of judgment, and that the world will be consumed by fire. But how do they know that it is really so ? How do they know what becomes of these wicked men that die ? None of them come back to tell them. They have nothing to depend on, but the word which they hear. And how do they know that all is not a cunningly devised fable.

ANSW. The sinners of the old world had the very same objection against what Noah told them of a flood about to drown the world. Yet the bare word of God proved to be sufficient evidence that such a thing was coming. What was the reason that none of the many millions then upon earth, believed what Noah said, but this, that it was a strange thing, that no such thing had ever before been known ? And what a strange story must that of Noah have appeared to them, wherein he told them of a deluge of waters above the tops of the mountains ! Therefore it is said Heb. xi. 7. That Noah was warned of God of things

things not seen as yet. It is probable, none could conceive how it could be that the whole world should be drowned in a flood of waters; and all were ready to ask, where there was water enough for it; and by what means it should be brought upon the earth. Noah did not tell them how it should be brought to pass: he only told them that God had said, that it should be: and that proved to be enough. The event shewed their folly in not depending on the mere word of God, who was able, who knew how to bring it to pass, and who could not lie.

In like manner the word of God will prove true in threatening a flood of eternal wrath, to overwhelm all the wicked. You will believe it, when the event shall prove it, when it shall be too late to profit by the belief. The word of God will never fail; nothing is so sure as that; heaven and earth shall pass away, but the word of God shall not pass away. It is firmer than mountains of brass. At the end the vision will speak and not lie. "The decree shall bring forth," and all wicked men shall know that God is the LORD, that he is a God of truth, and that they are fools who will not depend on his word. The wicked of the old world counted Noah a fool for depending so much on the word of God, as to put himself to all the fatigue and expense of building the ark; but the event showed that they themselves were the fools, and that he was wise.

2. CONSIDER that the spirit of God will not always strive with you; nor will his long suffering always wait upon you. So God said concerning the inhabitants of the old world; Gen. vi. 3. My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years. All this while God was striving with them.

It was a day of grace with them, and God's long suffering, all this while, waited upon them; as appears by 1 Pet. iii. 20. Which some time were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing. All this while they had an opportunity to escape, if they would but hearken and believe God.

EVEN after the ark was finished, which seems to have been but little before the flood came, still there was an opportunity; the door of the ark stood open for some time. After the ark was finished there was some time, during which Noah was employed in laying up stores in the ark. Even then it was not too late; the door of the ark yet stood open.——About a week before the flood came, Noah was commanded to begin to gather in the beasts and birds. During this last week still the door of the ark stood open.——But on the very day that the flood began to come, while the rain was yet withheld, Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives, went into the ark, and we are told, Gen. vii. 16. That God shut him in. Then the day of God's patience was past; the door of the ark was shut; God himself, who shuts and no man opens, shut the door. Then all hope of their escaping the flood was past. Then, after that, it was too late to repent that they had not hearkened to Noah's warnings, and had not entered into the ark, while the door stood open.

AFTER Noah and his family had entered into the ark, and God had shut them in, after the windows of heaven were opened, and they saw how the waters were poured down out of heaven, we may suppose that then many of those who were near, come running to the door of the ark, knocking at the door, and crying most piteously for entrance. But it was too late

late ; God himself had shut the door, and Noah had no licence, and probably no power, to open it. We may suppose, they stood knocking and calling, *Open to us, Open to us ; O let us in ; we beg that we may be let in.* And probably some of them pleaded old acquaintance with Noah ; that they had always been his neighbours, and had even helped him to build the ark. But all was in vain. There they stood, till the waters of the flood came, without mercy swept them away from the door of the ark, and swallowed them up.

So it will be with you, if you continue to refuse to hearken to the warnings, which are given you. Now God is striving with you. Now he is warning you of the approaching flood and calling upon you sabbath after sabbath. Now the door of the ark stands open. But God's spirit will not always strive with you : his long suffering will not always wait upon you. There is an appointed day of God's patience, which is as certainly limited, as it was to the old world. God hath set your bounds which you cannot pass. Though now warnings are continued in plenty ; yet there will be *last* knocks and *last* calls, the last that ever you shall hear. When the appointed time shall be elapsed, God will shut the door, and you shall never see it open again ; for God shutteth and no man openeth.

If you improve not your opportunity before that time, you will cry in vain, Lord, Lord, open to us. Mat. x. 12. and Luke xiii. 25, &c.——While you shall stand at the door with your piteous cries, the flood of God's wrath will come upon you, overwhelm you and you shall not escape. The tempest shall carry you away without mercy, and you shall be forever swallowed up and lost.

3. CONSIDER how mighty the billows of divine wrath will be, when they shall come. The waters of Noah's flood were very great. The deluge was vast; it was very deep; the billows reached as it were to the very heavens, being fifteen cubits above the highest mountains; and it was an ocean which had no shores; signifying the greatness of that wrath, which is coming on wicked men in another world, which will be like a mighty flood of waters, overwhelming them, and rising vastly high over their heads, with billows reaching to the very heavens. Those billows will be bigger, and higher, and heavier than mountains on their poor souls. The wrath of God will be an ocean without shores, as Noah's flood was: it will be misery that will have no end.

THE misery of the damned in hell can be better represented by nothing, than by a deluge of misery, a mighty deluge of wrath, which will be ten thousand times worse than a deluge of waters; for it will be a deluge of liquid fire, as in the scriptures it is called a lake of fire and brimstone.

At the end of the world, all the wicked shall literally be swallowed up in a vast deluge of fire, which shall be as great and as mighty, as Noah's deluge of water. See 2 Pet. iii. 5. 6. 7.—After that the wicked will have mighty billows of fire and brimstone eternally rolling over their poor souls, and their miserable, tormented bodies. Those billows will be bigger than the mountains, or they may be called vast liquid mountains of fire and brimstone. And when one billow shall have gone over their heads, another shall follow, and so one shall follow another, without intermission, giving them no rest day nor night to all eternity.

4. THIS flood of wrath will probably come upon

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you suddenly, when you shall think little of it, and it shall seem far from you. So the flood came upon the old world; see Mat. xxiv. 36. &c.——Probably many of them were surprized in the night by the waters busting suddenly in at their doors, or under the foundations of their houses, coming in upon them in their beds. For when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, the waters, as was observed before, burst forth in mighty torrents, as if they had issued out of the womb. To such a sudden surprize of the wicked of the old world in the night, probably that alludes in Job xxvii. 20. “Terroures take hold on him as waters; a tempest stealeth him away in the night.”

So destruction is wont to come on wicked men, who hear many warnings of approaching destruction, and yet will not be influenced by them. For he that is often reprov'd, and hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy. Prov. xxix. 1. And when they shall say, peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travel upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. 1. Thes. v. 3.

5. If you will not hearken to the many warnings, which are given you of approaching destruction, you will be guilty of more than brutish madness. You will be more brutish than the brutes themselves. The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib. They know upon whom they are dependent, and whom they must obey, and act accordingly. But you so long as you neglect your own salvation, act as if you knew not God, your creator and proprietor, nor your dependence upon him.-----The very beasts, when they see signs of an approaching storm, will betake themselves to their dens for shelter. Ye

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you, when abundantly warned of the approaching storm of divine vengeance will not fly to *the bidding-place from the storm and the covert from the tempest*. The sparrow, the swallow and other birds, when they are forewarned of approaching winter, will betake themselves to a safer climate. Yet you who have been often forewarned of the piercing blasts of divine wrath, will not, in order to escape them, enter into the new Jerusalem, of most mild and salubrious air, though the gate stands wide open to receive you. The very ants will be diligent in summer to lay up for winter. Yet you will do nothing to lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come. Balaam's ass would not run upon a drawn sword, though his master, for the sake of gain, would expose himself to the sword of God's wrath; and so God made the dumb ass, both in his words and actions, to rebuke the madness of the prophet. 2. Pet. ii. 16. In like manner you, although you have been often warned that the sword of God's wrath is drawn against you, and will certainly be thrust through you, if you proceed in your present course, still proceed regardless of the consequence.

So God made the very beasts and birds of the old world to rebuke the madness of the men of that day. For they, even all sorts of them, fled to the ark, while the door was yet open; which the men of that day refused to do; God hereby thus signifying, that their folly was greater, than that of the very brute creatures.

Such folly and madness are you guilty of, who refuse to hearken to the warnings that are given you of the approaching flood of the wrath of God.

You have been once more warned to day, while the door of the ark yet stands open. You have as it were

were once again heard the knocks of the hammer and ax in the building of the ark ; to put you in mind, that a flood is approaching. Take heed, therefore that you do not still stop your ears, treat these warnings with a regardless heart, and still neglect the great work which you have to do, lest the flood of wrath suddenly come upon you, sweep you away and there be no remedy.

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S E R M O N * II.

The unreasonableness of Indeterminati- on in Religion.

I K I N G S, xviii. 21.

*And ELIJAH came unto all the people and said, How long
halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be GOD,
follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the
people answered him not a word.*

IT is the manner of God, before he bestows any
signal or remarkable mercy on a people, first to
prepare them for it; and before he removes any aw-
ful judgments which he hath brought upon them for
their sins, first to cause them to forsake those sins
which procured those judgments. We have an in-
stance of this in the chapter wherein is the text.

It was a time of sore famine in Israel. There had
been neither rain nor dew, for the space of three years
and six months. This famine was brought upon the
land for their idolatry. But God was now about to
remove this judgment; and therefore to prepare them
for it, sends Elijah to convince them of the folly of
idolatry, and to bring them to repentance of it.---In
order

* DATED JUNE 1734

order to this, Elijah by the command of the LORD goes and shows himself to Ahab, and directs him to send and gather all Israel to him at mount Carmel, and all the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves, that eat at Jezebel's table, four hundred; that they might determine the matter and bring the controversy to an issue, whether Jéhovah or Baal were God.——To this end, Elijah proposes that each should take a bullock, that he should take one, and the prophets of Baal another, that each should cut his bullock in pieces, lay it on the wood, and put no fire under; and that the God who should answer by fire should be concluded to be God,

THE text contains an account of what Elijah said to all the people at their first meeting and of their silence “ And Elijah came unto all the people and “ said, how long halt ye between two opinions? If “ the LORD be GOD, follow him; but if Baal, then “ follow him.” To which the people, it seems, made no reply. In these words, we may observe,

1. How Elijah expostulates with the people about their halting so long between two opinions; in which expostulation may be observed,

(1.) WHAT the two opinions were, between which they halted, viz. Whether the LORD were God, or whether Baal were God. The case in Israel seems to have been this; there were some who were altogether for Baal and wholly rejected the true God; of which number, to be sure, were Jezebel and the prophets of Baal. And there were some among them, who were altogether for the God of Israel and wholly rejected Baal; as God told Elijah that “ he had yet “ left in Israel seven thousand, that had not bowed “ the knee to Baal, and whose mouths had not kissed him”; 1 Kings xix. 18. BUT

BUT the rest of the people halted between two opinions. They saw that some were for one, and some for the other, and they did not know which to choose ; and as is commonly the case, when difference of opinions prevails, there were many who had no religion at all ; they were not settled in any thing ; the different opinions prevalent in Israel distracted and confounded them.—Many who professed to believe in the true GOD, were yet very cold and indifferent, and many very wavering and unsettled. They saw that the king and queen were for Baal ; and Baal's party was the prevailing party ; but their forefathers had been for the LORD ; and they knew not which were right. Thus they halted between two opinions.

(2.) IN this expostulation is implied the unreasonableness of their thus halting between two opinions.----- " How long halt ye between two opinions ? If the LORD be GOD, follow him ; but if " Baal, then follow him"-----Which implies that they ought to determine one way or the other.

2. WE may observe their silence on this occasion ;-----" And the people answered him not a word" as being convicted in their own consciences of the unreasonableness of their being for so long a time wavering and unresolved : they had nothing to reply in excuse for themselves.

DOCTRINE. The unresolvedness of many persons in religion is very unreasonable.

I. PROP. Many persons remain exceedingly undetermined with respect to the things of religion. They are very much undetermined in themselves whether to embrace religion or to reject it.-----Many who are baptized and make a profession of religion, and seem to be christians ; are yet in their own minds halt-
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ing between two opinions : they never yet came fully to a conclusion, whether to be christians or not. They are taught the christian religion in their childhood, and have the bible, the word preached, and the means of grace all their days ; yet continue, and grow up, and many grow old, in an unresolvèdness, whether to embrace christianity or not ; and many continue unresolvèd as long as they live.

1. THERE are some persons who have never come to a settled determination in their own minds, whether or no there be any truth in religion. They hear of the things of religion from their childhood all their days ; but never come to a conclusion in their own minds, whether they be real or fabulous. Particularly, some have never come to any determination in their own minds, whether there be any such thing as *conversion*. They hear much talk about it, and know that many pretend to be the subjects of it ; but they are never resolvèd whether all be not mere designed hypocrisy and imposture, or the mere notions of whimsical persons.

SOME never come to any determination whether the scriptures be the word of GOD, or whether they be the invention of men ; and whether the story concerning JESUS CHRIST be any thing but a fable. They fear it is true, but sometimes very much doubt of it. Sometimes when they hear arguments for it, they give an assent to it, that it is true ; but upon every little objection or temptation arising, they call it in question ; and are always wavering and never settled about it.

So it seems to have been with many of the Jews in CHRIST'S time ; they were always at a loss what to make of him, whether he were indeed the CHRIST, or whether he were Elias, or one of the old prophets,

or

for a mere impostor. Joh. x. 24. 25. "Then came the Jews round about him; and said unto him, how long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the CHRIST, tell us plainly. JESUS answered them, I told you, and ye believed not."——Some have never so much as come to a resolution in their own minds, whether there be a God or not. They know not that there is, and oftentimes very much doubt of it.

2. THERE are some who never have come to any determination in their own minds, whether to embrace religion in the practice of it; Religion consists not merely, or chiefly in theory or speculation, but in practice. It is a practical thing; the end of it is to guide and influence us in our practice: and considered in this view, there are multitudes who never have come to a conclusion whether to embrace religion or not.-----It is probably pretty general for men to design to be religious sometime or other, before they die: For none intend to go to hell. But they still keep it at a distance; they put it off from time to time, and never come to any conclusion which determines them in their present practice. And some never so much as fix upon any time. They design to be religious sometime before they die, but they know not when.

THERE are many who have always hitherto continued unresolved about the necessity of striving and being earnestly engaged for salvation. They flatter themselves that they may obtain salvation, though they be not so earnestly engaged; though they mind the world and their worldly affairs more than their salvation. They are often told how necessary it is that they make haste and not delay, that they do whatever their hand findeth to do with their might, that

that they be violent, that a dull, slack way of seeking salvation is never like to be effectual. But of these things, they are never thoroughly convinced. Some seem to resolve to be in earnest, and seem to set out with some engagedness of mind; but soon fail, because they have never been fully convinced of the necessity of it.

MANY have never come to a determination what to choose for their portion. There are but two things which God offers to mankind for their portion: One is this world, with the pleasures and profits of sin, together with eternal misery ensuing: The other is heaven and eternal glory, with a life of self-denial and respect to all the commands of God, preceeding. Many as long as they live come to no settled determination, which of these to choose. They must have one or the other, they cannot have both. But they always remain in suspense, and never make their choice.

THEY would fain have heaven and this world too; they would have salvation and the pleasures and profits of sin too. But considering heaven and the world, as God offers them, they will have neither. God offers heaven only with the self-denial and difficulty which are in the way to it; and they are not willing to have heaven on these conditions. God offers the world, and the pleasures of sin to men, not alone, but with eternal misery in connection with them; and so neither are they willing to have the world. They would fain divide heaven from the holiness and self-denial which are the way to it, and from the holiness which reigns in it, and then they would be glad to have heaven. They would fain divide sin from hell, and then they would fully determine, forever to cleave to sin.

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BUT GOD will not make such a division for them. They must have one or the other of these for their portion, as GOD offers; and therefore they never make any choice at all.----Indeed they do practically and in effect choose sin and hell. But they do not come to any resolution in their *own minds* which they will have for their portion, whether heaven and holiness, or the world and hell: they are always wavering and halting between two opinions. Sometimes they seem to determine for the one and sometimes for the other. In times wherein they meet with no difficulty or temptation, and can as they say, do their duty without hurting themselves or much crossing their carnal inclinations, they seem to choose heaven and holiness. At other times wherein they meet with difficulty in the way of duty, and great temptations of worldly profits or pleasures, are laid before them, then they choose the world and let heaven and holiness alone.-----There are among us vast multitudes, before whom these two things have been set hundreds of times, who have never to this day come to a determination which to have.

So they have never yet determined which shall be their master, whether GOD or mammon. There are but few who have undertaken the service of GOD, and are come to a resolution and preparedness of mind to serve GOD and follow CHRIST, at all times, and to whatever difficulties it may expose them. Yet at the same time neither are they determined that they will continue to serve satan: they are afraid to draw up such a conclusion.----Thus many spend away their lives without making their choice, putting that off, though they do in the mean time practically choose the service of satan. These are the persons of whom the apostle James speaks in chap. i. 8. "The double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

II. To

II. To continue thus undetermined and unresolv'd in the things of religion, is very unreasonable, and that upon the following accounts.

I. THE things of religion are things wherein we are to the highest degree interested. The truth or falsehood of the doctrines of religion concerns us to the highest degree possible. It is no matter of indifference to us whether there be a God or not; or whether the scriptures be the word of God; or whether CHRIST be the son of God; or whether there be any such thing as conversion. It makes infinite odds to us, whether these things be so or not. Therefore we are under the greatest obligation in point of interest to resolve in our minds whether they be true or false. They who are undetermined whether there be any truth in religion, and are contented to be so, not inquiring nor thoroughly using the means to be determined; act very unreasonably. They remain in doubt whether there be any such thing as an heaven or hell; are quiet and easy to continue ignorant in this matter; are not engaged in their minds to come to a determination; do not search and inquire what arguments there are to prove any such things; nor diligently weigh and consider the force of them; but busy their minds about other things of infinitely less importance; and act as if they thought it did not much concern them, whether there be a future and eternal state.

If they think that there is not, yet it is a matter of so great importance, that no wise man would rest, until he had satisfied himself; because if there be such a future state as the scriptures tell us of, then we must have our part in it, either in a state of eternal rewards, or in a state of eternal punishment.----- So it is no matter of indifference to us what we have

have for our portion, whether this world with hell, or a life of holiness and self-denial with heaven. These opposite portions relate not merely to a few days in this world, but they relate to eternity. It is infinite madness therefore not to come to a determination.

So it is no matter of indifference what master we serve, whether God or mammon; or what interest we will pursue, whether our temporal or eternal interest; or which we prefer, the commands of God or our pleasures, our ease, and convenience. Doubtless it will make a vast odds one way or the other. We ought therefore to come to some determination, which we will choose.

2. God hath made us reasonable creatures and capable of rationally determining for ourselves. God hath made us capable of a good acquaintance with those things, which do especially concern our interest. Doubtless God hath made man capable of discovering the truth in matters of religion, of coming to a good determination in these questions, whether the scriptures be the word of God, whether there be a future state, and the like. The resolution of these questions, which it so much concerns us to determine, is not above our capacities. God hath not set these things beyond the extent of our faculties.

So God hath made us capable of making a wise choice for ourselves, as to the life which we shall choose to lead. He hath given man so much understanding, as to make him capable of determining which is best, to lead a life of self-denial and enjoy eternal happiness, or to take our swing in sinful enjoyments and burn in hell for ever. The question is of no difficult determination.-----It is so far from being a matter too hard for our reason, that the reason of a child is sufficient to determine this matter. Therefore

Therefore men in remaining undetermined in these matters, do not act as reasonable creatures, but make themselves like "the horse and the mule, which have "no understanding." Psal. xxxii. 9.

3. GOD puts into our hands an happy opportunity to determine for ourselves. What better opportunity can a man desire to consult his own interest, than to have liberty to choose his own portion? God setteth life and death before us. Deut. xxx. 19. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against "you, that I have set before you life and death, "blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that "thou and thy seed after thee may live." See also Ezek. xviii. 31. 32. And chap. xxxiii. 11. What better opportunity can we desire for securing to ourselves the greatest good, than to have eternal life, and unchangeable happiness set before us, and offered to our choice? Therefore those who neglect coming to a resolution, act unreasonably, because they stand so much in their own light and miss so glorious an opportunity.

4. THE things among which we are to make our choice are but few in number; there are but two portions set before us, one of which must be our portion; either life or death, either blessing or cursing; either a life of universal and persevering obedience with eternal glory, or a worldly, carnal, wicked life, with eternal misery. If there were many terms in the offer made us, many things of nearly an equal value, one of which we must choose, to remain long in suspense and undetermined would be more excusable; there would be more reason for long deliberation before we should fix. But there are but two terms, there are but two states in another world, in one or the other of which we must be fixed to all eternity.

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AND there are but two states in this world, a state of sin, and a state of holiness, a natural state and a converted state. There is but one way in which we can come to life, which renders the determination of reason much the easier. There are but two masters to one of which we must be reputed the servants, Baal and Jehovah, God and mammon: There are but two competitors for the possession of us, CHRIST and the devil.---- There are but two paths, in one of which you are to travel, either in the strait and narrow way which leadeth unto life, or the broad way which leadeth unto destruction.

THIS shows the unreasonableness of those who live under light, and have the offers of the gospel made to them, and yet remain from year to year unfixed and undetermined, halting between two opinions.

5. GOD hath given us all needed helps to determine us. We have all needed helps to determine our understandings, as to the truth of the things of religion, as whether there be a God, whether the scriptures be the word of God, whether there be a future state, &c. We are not left in the dark as to these things, as the poor heathen are, who are under great disadvantages to come to the knowledge of the truth, though they be not under an impossibility, for *they may haply feel after GOD and find him*; Acts xvii. 27. But we have a clear sunshine to guide us, we have a particular description of those things which are set before us for truth, and have great opportunity to examine them. The scripture lies open before us, and all the doctrines of the gospel are particularly set forth, with the reasons on which their evidence is founded. We may search and try their force and sufficiency, as we will.

WE have great helps to a wise and rational determination

mination in our choice ; to determine whether it be best for us to choose a life of sin or a life of holiness, the service of God or the service of Baal. We have very plainly set before us the advantages of both sides ; the loss and gain are particularly stated. CHRIST hath dealt by us faithfully, and hath told us what we shall get, and what we shall lose, by being his followers. He hath also told us what we shall get, and what we shall lose by a life of sin. He hath not dealt by us deceitfully. He hath not pretended greater advantages in godliness, than there really are, nor greater disadvantages or dangers in sin. Joh. xiv. 2. " In my fathers house are many mansions. If " it were not so, I would have told you."

He hath told us plainly that we must take up the cross daily and follow him ; that we must hate father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, and our own life also, in order to become his disciples ; and that we must cut off our right hands, and pluck out our right eyes, in order to enter into heaven. Thus we have a fair opportunity to count the cost on both sides, and are directed so to do. Luke xiv. 28.-----How unreasonable therefore is it, for men who have all these helps and advantages, to remain in suspense, and to come to no conclusion whether they will be christians or heathens, whether they will be for God or the devil ; though they have lived under the preaching of the word, and offers of the gospel, for many years.

6. WE have no reason to expect to be under better advantages to determine hereafter, than we are now. We never shall have a clearer revelation of gospel truth ; never shall have the advantages and disadvantages of both sides more plainly set before us, than they are already in the word of God ; nor are we

we ever like to be under better advantages to know what will be best for us, and most for our interest. Those therefore who delay, gain nothing by their delays, but give satan more opportunity to darken their minds, to deceive them, and lead them astray in their choice. Therefore their delay of coming to a resolution is unreasonable.

7. If they come not to a determination in this life, God will determine for them, and will appoint them their portion with the wicked. If sinners, by refusing to choose either life or death, either heaven or hell, could thereby avoid both; or if in this case the matter would remain undetermined; till they should determine it; the folly and unreasonableness of delaying a determination, would not be so great. But that is not the case; if they go on halting between two opinions, God will determine for them, and that quickly; he will determine where their portion shall be, viz. among the unbelievers, in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone forever. God will not wait upon them always, to see what they will choose; but he will put an issue to the matter by his unalterable sentence.-----Therefore it becomes all, if they are afraid to have their lot assigned them in hell, to come soon to a determination.

8. DELAY in this case is unreasonable, because those who delay, know not how soon the opportunity of choosing for themselves will be past. This opportunity will last no longer than life; when once life is past, they will no more have the offer made them; the sentence will be past; the matter will be issued.

THOSE who delay their choice in this world, will be glad to choose afterwards; then they will not be at all at a loss which to choose; they will be able easily to determine. The judgments of sinners, who

are departed this life, are soon resolved whether there be any truth in religion or not; they can soon determine which is best and most eligible, a life of obedience and self-denial, with heaven for a reward, or a life of irreligion and sin, with hell for a punishment. Now they no longer halt between two opinions; but it is too late, their opportunity is past; they are ready too late. They would give all the world for another opportunity to choose; they would then soon come to a determination. But it will not be granted them.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

I. LET this put every one upon *examining* himself, whether or no he have ever yet come to a full determination in the affair of religion.

FIRST, inquire whether or no you have ever yet come to a full determination with respect to the *truth* of the things of religion. Have you ever been fully convinced? Is it a question, which has been answered and determined with you, whether there be a future state; or does it yet remain a question with you unresolved? Are you not yet to seek whether there be any future state, and whether or no the story about JESUS CHRIST be any more than a fable? Here I desire you to note two things.

I. IF the main reason why you assent to the truth of religion be that others believe so, and you have been so instructed from your childhood; you are of those with whom the truth of religion yet remains undetermined. Tradition and education will never fix and settle the mind, in a satisfactory and effectual belief of the truth of religion. Though men, taking religion upon trust, may seem to give a full assent to the truth of religion, and not to call it in question; yet such a faith will not stand a shock; a temptation easily

easily overthrows it : The reason of man in time of trial will not rest on so poor evidence as that.

THERE are multitudes who seem to grant the truth of religion, with whom the main foundation of their faith is the tradition of their fathers, or the profession of their neighbours ; and it is to be feared, it is so with many who count themselves good christians. But as to all such persons as never have seen any other evidence to satisfy them, either of the truth or falsehood of religion, they are they that halt between two opinions ---- The same may be said of those who are unstable in their *disposition* with regard to CHRIST or the things which he taught.

2. If you are fully come to a determination concerning the things of religion, that they are true, they will be of weight with you above all things in the world. If you be really convinced that these things are true, that they are no fable, but reality, it is impossible but that you be influenced by them above all things in the world ; for these things are so great, and so infinitely exceed all temporal things, that it cannot be otherwise. He that really is convinced that there is a heaven and hell, and an eternal judgment ; that the soul as soon as parted from the body, appears before the judgment seat of God ; and that the happiness and misery of a future state is as great as the scripture represents it ; or that God is as holy, just and jealous, as he hath declared concerning himself in his word ; I say, he that is really convinced and hath settled it with himself, that these things are certainly true ; will regard them and be influenced by them above all things in the world. He will be more concerned by far how he shall escape eternal damnation, and have the favour of God and eternal life, than how he shall get the world, gratify the flesh, please

please his neighbours, get honour, or obtain any temporal advantage whatsoever. His main inquiry will not be what shall I eat, and what shall I drink, &c. but he will seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

EXAMINE yourselves therefore by this : Are not your hearts chiefly set upon the world and the things of it ? Is it not more your concern, care and endeavour to further your outward interest, then to secure an interest in heaven ? And is not this the very reason, that you have never seen the reality of eternal things.

SECONDLY, inquire, whether you have ever yet come to a determination about religion with respect to the practice of it ; whether you have chosen heaven with the way to it, viz. the way of obedience and self denial, before this world and the ways of sin ; whether you have determined upon it as most eligible, to devote yourselves to the service of God.--- Here I shall mention three or four things, which are signs that men halt between two opinions in this matter.

1. To put off duty till hereafter.--- When persons love to keep their duty at a distance, engage not in it for the present, but choose to keep at a little distance from it ; when they think of engaging in religion in better earnest in a little time, when they shall so and so be under better conveniences for it, but do it not now, do not make haste without delay ; when they are very good *intenders* concerning what they will do to morrow, but very poor *performers* to day ; when they say, as Felix, “ go thy way for this time, “ when I have a convenient season I will call for thee,” when these things are so it is a sign that they halt between two opinions, and have never as

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yet come to a full determination with respect to the practice of religion. Those that have once fully determined that religion is necessary and eligible, will not desire to put it off, but will make it their present and immediate business.

2. It is a sign of the same thing, when persons are strict and conscientious in some things, but not in all, not universal in their obedience; do some duties, but live in the omission of others; avoid some sins, but allow themselves in others; are conscientious with respect to the duties of worship public and private, but not in their behaviour to their neighbours; are not just in their dealings; nor conscientious in paying their debts; nor do to others, as they would that they should do to them; but have crooked, perverse ways in their dealings among mankind.

THE same may be said when they are just in their dealings and trade with men, but are not conscientious in other things; indulge sensual appetites, drink to excess, or allow themselves in wanton practices: Or are honest and temperate, but licentious in using their tongues, backbiting and reproaching their fellow-men. 2. Tim. iii. 6. 7.

3. It is a sign that you halt between two opinions, if you sometimes are wont to be considerably engaged in religion, but at other times neglect it; sometimes forming a resolution to be in good earnest, then dropping it again; sometimes seeming to be really engaged in seeking salvation, and very earnest in religious duties; at other times wholly taken up about the things of the world, while religion is neglected, and religious duties are omitted.

THESE things show that you are yet unsettled, have never yet come to a full determination concerning religion, but are halting between two opinions, and therefore

therefore are thus unstable in all your ways, and proceed thus by fits and starts in religion, Jam. i. 6. 7. 8.

“ But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering : for he
“ that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven
“ with the wind and tossed. For let not that man
“ think that he shall receive any thing of the LORD.
“ A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

If your determination were fixed in religion, you would be more steady in your practice.

4. It is a sign that you are halting between two opinions, if it be your manner, to balk your duty, whenever any notable difficulty comes in the way, considerably cross to your interest, or very inconsistent with your ease or convenience, or your temporal honour. Whatever zeal you may seem to have, whatever concern about the things of religion, and however strict you be in ordinary ; you have never, if this be your manner, come to a full determination ; have never fully made choice of religion and the benefits of it, for your only portion ; and at best have got no further than king Agrippa, who was *almost* persuaded to be a christian. Acts, xxvi. 28.—

You are in the state of the stony ground hearers, you have no root in yourselves, and like a tree without root, are easily blown down by every wind.

II. I shall conclude with an earnest EXHORTATION to all, no longer to halt between two opinions, but immediately to come to a determination whether to be christians or not. Let me insist upon it, that you now make a choice, whether you will have heaven, with a life of universal and persevereing obedience for your portion ; or hell, with a life spent in the pursuit of this world.—Consider those things which have been said, shewing the unreasonableness

of continuing in such irresolution about an affair of infinite importance to you, and as to which you have so short an opportunity to make your choice. Consider two things in addition to what hath been already said.

F. THOSE who live under the gospel, and thus continue undermined about religion, are more abominable to God than the heathen. God had rather that men should either be christians, or down-right heathens. He hates those persons who continue from year to year, under the calls, and warnings, and instructions, and intreaties of God's word; who yet can be brought to nothing; who will come to no determination at all; will neither be christians, nor heathens. These are they who are spoken of in Rev. iii. 15. 16. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art luke-warm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth."——And Ezek. xx. 39. "As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the LORD GOD, Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols."---- These are they spoken of in 2 Tim. iii. 7. Ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth."

2. If you still refuse to come to a determination whether to be christians or not; how just will it be, God shall give you no further opportunity! If you refuse to make any choice at all; and after all that hath been done to bring you to it, in setting life and death so often before you, in calling and warning you, you will not come to a determination, how just will

will it be, if God shall wait no longer upon you, if he shall, by his unalterable sentence, determine the case himself; if he shall fix your state with the unbelievers, and teach you the truth and eligibleness of religion, by sad and fatal experience, when it will be too late for you to choose your portion, and the offer will be no more made you !

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S E R M O N * III.

Unbelievers contemn the Glory and Excellency of CHRIST.

A C T S, iv. vi.

This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders.

IN the foregoing chapters we have an account of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the apostles at Pentecost, and of the extraordinary effects of it in their speaking boldly in the name of JESUS, and speaking many strange languages, and so being made the instruments of the sudden conversion of vast multitudes. And in the chapter immediately preceding, there is an account how Peter and John miraculously healed a man, who had been a cripple from his birth; which together with the word which they spake to the people that flocked together on the occasion, was the means of a new accession to the church: so that the number of them that heard the word and believed, as we are told in the fourth verse of this chapter, was about five thousand.

THIS sudden and extraordinary progress of the gospel greatly alarmed the priests and scribes and other chief men among the Jews; so that they laid hands

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on Peter and John, and put them in hold, and the next day brought them fourth to appear before them, and called them to an account for what they had done. They asked them particularly by what power, or by what name they had wrought the miracle on the impotent man. Upon which Peter filled with the holy ghost, makes answer, "Ye rulers of the
 " people and elders of Israel-----Be it known unto
 " you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by
 " the name of JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth, whom ye
 " crucified, whom GOD raised from the dead, even
 " by him doth this man stand here before you whole.
 " This is the stone which was set at nought by you
 " builders, which is become the head of the corner."
 In the verse of the text the apostle mentions to them as now fulfilled, that in the 118th Psal. 22. verse. "The
 " stone which the builders refused is become the
 " head stone of the corner." This text in that psalm, the apostle applies to them;

1. By telling them, *This is the stone*, i. e. this person of whom he had spoken in the foregoing verse, viz. JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth, whom they had crucified and whom God had raised from the dead.

2. By telling them, that they were the builders spoken of. They before whom the apostle then was, and to whom he was speaking, were rulers and elders and scribes of the people, the high priest and other priests. They as they were set to be rulers and teachers among God's people, by their office, were called to be builders of the church of God.

3. By telling them, that they had set this stone at nought. They had so done by refusing to accept of him. CHRIST came to his own, and his own received him not: and not only so, but they had openly manifested the greatest contempt of him. They had

had mocked him, scourged and spit upon him, and in derision crowned him with a crown of thorns, and arrayed him in a mock-robe, and then had put him to a most ignominious death.

4. By telling him, that notwithstanding this he was become the head of the corner. In spite of all that they could do, he had obtained the chief place in the building. God had made him the main foundation of it, by raising him from the dead, and so putting great honour upon him, and by pouring out his spirit and enduing his disciples with extraordinary gifts, and by suddenly converting so many thousands to be the followers of CHRIST.---- They put him to death that he might have no followers, concluding that that would utterly put an end to his interest in Judea. But they were greatly disappointed: for the gospel had incomparably greater success after CHRIST's death than before. God had accomplished that very thing which they endeavoured to prevent by CHRIST's crucifixion, viz. CHRIST's being believed in and submitted to, as the great prophet of God and prince of his people.

D O C T R I N E.

UNBELIEVERS set nothing by all the glory and excellency in CHRIST.

I. THEY set nothing by the excellency of his person.----- CHRIST is a great and glorious person, a person of infinite worthiness, on which account he is infinitely esteemed and loved of the father, and is continually adored by the angels. But unbelievers have no esteem at all of him on that account. They have no value at all of him on account of his being the Son of God. He is not set the higher in their

their esteem on the account of his standing in so near and honourable a relation to God the father. He is not valued at all the more for his being a divine person, or one that is God. By his having the divine nature, he is infinitely exalted above all created beings. But he is not at all exalted by it in their esteem. They set nothing by his infinite majesty ; his glorious brightness and greatness excite not any true respect or reverence in them.

CHRIST is the holy one of God : he is so holy that the heavens are not pure in his sight. He is possessed of all that holiness which is the infinite beauty and loveliness of the divine nature. But an unbeliever sets nothing by the holiness of CHRIST.....

CHRIST is the wisdom of God and the power of God, as he is called 1. Cor. i. 24. But an unbeliever sets nothing by his power and wisdom..... The LORD JESUS CHRIST is full of grace and mercy : the mercy and love of God appear no where else so brightly and gloriously, as they do in the face of JESUS CHRIST. But an unbeliever sets no value at all upon the infinite grace of CHRIST.

NEITHER do unbelievers set any thing by those excellent virtues which appeared in CHRIST's human nature, when he was upon earth. He was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners ; he was meek and lowly of heart ; he was patient under afflictions and injuries ; when he was reviled, he reviled not again. But unbelievers set nothing by these things in JESUS CHRIST..... They very often hear how excellent and glorious a person CHRIST is : they are told of his holiness, and grace, and condescension, and meekness ; and have the excellencies of CHRIST plainly set forth to them ; yet they set all at nought.

2. THEY set nothing by his excellency in his work and office. They are told how glorious and comple

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plete a mediator he is, how sufficient to answer all our necessities, and to save sinners to the uttermost; but they make light of it all; yea that make nothing of it. — They hear of the wonderful wisdom of God in contriving such a way of salvation by CHRIST, they have the manifold wisdom of God set forth to them; but they set nothing by this wisdom, nor do they make any account of the excellency of this way of salvation.

THE unbeliever hears what a wonderful thing it was, that he who was in the form of God and esteemed it no robbery to be equal with God, should take upon him the human nature, and come and live in this world in a mean and low condition; but he makes nothing of this. — He hears much of the dying love of CHRIST to sinners, how wonderful it was that so glorious a person, who is infinitely above the angels, should so set his love on such worms of the dust, so much below him, on such sinful creatures, who were his enemies, as to come and be made a curse for them, and die a cruel and ignominious death in their stead; but he sets nothing by all this. This dying love of CHRIST is a thing of no account with him, those great things that CHRIST hath done and suffered, are with him light matters, things of no weight at all.

UNBELIEVERS not only set *little* by the glory and excellency of CHRIST, but they set *nothing* by these things. Notwithstanding all the shows and pretences which many natural men make of respect to CHRIST, by speaking honourably of CHRIST in their prayers, and in their common conversation, and by coming to sacraments and attending other ordinances of CHRIST; yet indeed they do not set so much by all the glory and excellency of CHRIST, either the glory of his person, or the glory of his work as a Saviour, as they do by the smallest earthly enjoyment.

I PROCEED NOW to mention some EVIDENCES of the truth of this doctrine.

I. THEY never give CHRIST any honor on the account of this his glory and excellency. They may and often do pay CHRIST an external and seeming respect; but they do not honor CHRIST in their hearts. They have no exalting thoughts of CHRIST, no inward respect or reverence towards him: they have indeed no honorable, respectful thoughts of CHRIST. All their outward worship is only feigned; none of it arises from any real honor or respect in their hearts towards Christ. It is either only for fashions sake, and in compliance with custom, or else it is forced, and is what they are driven to by fear, as we read Psal. lxvi. 3. "Through the greatness of thy power, shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee." In the original it is, *shall thine enemies lie unto thee*, i. e. yield a feigned obedience. Through the greatness of Christ's power, and for fear of his wrath, his enemies who have no respect or honour for him in their hearts, will lie to him, and make a show of respect when they have none.

AN unbeliever is not sensible that Christ is worthy of any glory, and therefore does not at all seek the glory of Christ in any thing that he does; he does nothing that he does in religion, out of respect to Christ's glory, but wholly for other ends, which shows that he sees not Christ to be worthy of any glory.—Christ is set last and lowest in the heart of an unbeliever. He has high thoughts of other things; he has high thoughts of creature objects and earthly enjoyments, but mean and low thoughts of Christ. He has more honorable thoughts of that which is but mere dirt and dung, than he has of Jesus Christ.

THE unbeliever shows the mean and contemptible
thoughts

thoughts that he has of CHRIST, in refusing to accept of him, and in shutting the door of his heart against him. CHRIST stands at the door and knocks, and sometimes stands many years knocking at the door of his heart, and he refuses to open to him. Now it certainly shows that men have a very mean thought of a person, when they shut him out of their doors.

Unbelievers show the mean and dishonourable thoughts they have of CHRIST in that they dare not trust him. They believe not what he says to be true: they will not trust the word of CHRIST, so far as the word of one of their honest neighbours, or of a servant whom they have found to be faithful. — It also appears that they have no real honour for CHRIST in their hearts, in that they refuse to obey his commands. They do nothing that they do, from a spirit of obedience to him: and that external obedience which they render, is but a forced, feigned obedience, and not from any respect to CHRIST's authority or worthiness to be obeyed.

2. THEY have no love to him on the account of his glory and excellency. If they did set any thing by all the glory and excellency of CHRIST, or if they saw any excellency or glory in CHRIST; they would have some measure of love to CHRIST. But the truth is, they see no form or comeliness in CHRIST, and therefore they have no love at all to CHRIST: an unbeliever never exercises one act of true love to CHRIST. All that he is told of the glory of CHRIST, of his divine perfections, of his holiness, his meekness and grace, has no influence at all to draw forth any love. The display of these things doth no more draw forth love out of the heart of an unbeliever, than it draws forth love from the stones and rocks.

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2. THEY have no love to him on the account of his glory and excellency. If they did set any thing by all the glory and excellency of CHRIST, or if they saw any excellency or glory in CHRIST; they would have some measure of love to CHRIST. But the truth is, they see no form or comeliness in CHRIST, and hence they have no love at all to CHRIST: an unbeliever never exercises one act of true love to CHRIST. All that he is told of the glory of CHRIST, of his divine perfections, of his holiness, his meekness and grace, has no influence at all to draw forth any love. The display of these things doth no more draw forth love out of the heart of an unbeliever, than it draws forth love from the stones and rocks.

A NATURAL man hath no love of benevolence towards CHRIST. Notwithstanding all that is declared

to him of the excellency of CHRIST, he has no good will towards CHRIST. He rejoices not in his glory and happiness; he would not care what became of CHRIST, if he could but escape hell. If CHRIST should be dethroned, or made miserable, or should cease to be, he has not so much good will to CHRIST, as would make him concerned about it. And if the kingdom and interest of CHRIST in the world, should go to ruin, it would be no wise grievous to the unbeliever, provided his own interest could be secure.

So also an unbeliever has no love of complacency in JESUS CHRIST for his excellency. He takes no delight in the view or consideration of any of that glory and excellency of CHRIST, of which he is told. He is told that it is exceedingly beautiful and glorious; but he sees nothing entertaining in it; he takes no pleasure in the view of any thing that he can see in CHRIST: the thoughts of the glory of CHRIST are no wise entertaining to him: he has no delight in the thoughts of it, or in any contemplations upon it.—— He takes delight in thinking of these and those earthly objects; but when he comes to turn his mind upon JESUS CHRIST, if ever he so does, this is to him a dry and barren subject: he finds nothing there to feed and delight his soul; no beauty or loveliness to please or gratify him.

3: UNBELIEVERS have no desires after the enjoyment of CHRIST. If they did set any thing by the glory and excellency of CHRIST, they would have some desires after him on account of that excellency: especially when he is offered to them, and is from time to time set forth, as the proper object of their choice and desires. That which men prize, they are wont to desire, especially if it be represented to them as attainable, and as fit and suitable for them. But unbelievers have no desires after the enjoyment of CHRIST. They desire to be delivered from hell, but they desire not to enjoy CHRIST.

THEY have no idea of any happiness to be had in the enjoyment of CHRIST: they cannot conceive what happiness there can be in beholding CHRIST and being with him, in seeing his holiness and contemplating his wonderful grace and divine glory. They have no relish for any such thing, nor appetite after it.

4. THEY show that they set nothing by the glory and excellency of CHRIST, in that they seek not at all conformity to that glory and excellency. A natural man may seek to be holy, but it is not for holiness sake, it is only that he may escape wrath. He has no desires after holiness, nor is it indeed holiness that he seeks, because he is all the while an enemy to holiness. A natural man has no desires to have his soul conformed to the glorious beauty and excellency of Christ, nor to have his image upon him.

If he in any degree prized or delighted in the excellencies of Christ, he would necessarily desire to be like him so far as he could. This we see in ourselves and in all men, when we see any qualifications in others, that are pleasing to us and that we set by, it is natural for us to endeavour to imitate them and to seek to be in those things conformed to those persons. Hence men are apt to learn of those, of whom they have a great esteem: they naturally fall into an imitation of their ways and manner of behaviour. But natural men feel within themselves no disposition or inclination to learn of Christ, or to imitate him. Their tempers and dispositions remain quite contrary to Christ's, neither do they grow at all better or more conformed to Christ, but wax worse and worse. Tim. iii. 13. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse."

A P P L I C A T I O N.

I. THIS doctrine may teach us the heinousness of the sin of unbelief, as this sin sets all the glory and excellency of Christ at nought. It often appears strange to natural men, that unbelief should be spoken of as such a heinous and crying sin. They cannot see such evil in it. There are other sins which often trouble natural men's consciences, when this sin of unbelief troubles them not at all, though it be that which brings far greater guilt upon them, than those sins about which they are more troubled.

THIS that has been now said may show why unbelief is spoken of as such a heinous sin, as it is, Joh. iii. 18. and chap. xvi. 9. and 1. Joh. v. 10. For thereby all the glory and excellency of Christ is set at nought, though it be so great; though it be infinite; though it be the glory of the godhead itself, and though it has been so gloriously manifested in what Christ has done and suffered. Natural men in their unbelief cast contempt on all this glory, and tread it under foot, as being nothing worth. Their unbelief treats the excellency of Christ, as being of less value than the meanest earthly enjoyments.

II. THIS doctrine may convict natural men in four particulars.

I. HEREBY you may be convinced of the greatness of your guilt. Consider how great and excellent that person is, whom you thus set at nought. Contempt of any person is heinous in proportion to the worthiness and dignity of the person contemned. Though we are but men, and worms of the dust, and very vile, sinful creatures; yet we take it grievously when we are despised. Consider how you yourselves are ready to resent it, when any of your neighbours

seem to slight you, and set light by what you say and do, and to make no account of it, but to treat you as if you were good for nothing, or not worth minding. Do you take this well of your neighbours and equals, when you observe any thing of this nature? are you not ready to look upon it with resentment, to think very ill of it, and to judge that you have great cause to be offended?

BUT if it be such a crime to despise you and set you at nought, what is it to set at nought the eternal infinitely glorious son of God, in comparison with whom you and all nations are nothing and less than nothing and vanity? You dislike it much to be contemned by your equals; but you would take it yet more greivously to be despised by your inferiors, by those whom on every account you much excel.----- What a crime is it then for a vile, sinful worm, to set at nought him who is the brightness of the glory of the king of kings!

It would be a crime inexpressibly heinous to set *little* by the glory and excellency of such a person; but it is more so, to set *nothing at all* by it, as you do. You have no value at all for it, as has been shown.--- And this is the more aggravated, as Christ is a person whom you so much need, and as he came into the world out of infinite grace to sinners, to lay down his life to deliver them from hell, and purchase for them eternal glory. How much has Christ done and suffered, that you might have opportunity to be saved! Yet you set nothing by it all; you set nothing by the blood of Christ, even by that blood that was shed for such poor sinners as you are, and that is offered to you for your salvation. But you trample under foot the blood of the son of God.----- If Christ had come into the world only to teach us, it would have

have been a heinous thing, to trample under foot his word and instructions. But when he came *to die* for us, how much more heinous is it to trample under foot his *blood*!

MEN take it hardly to have any of their qualifications or actions despised, which they esteem commendable. But especially do they highly resent it, when others slight their kindness. And above all when they have put themselves out of their way, and have denied themselves, and suffered considerably to do others a kindness; then to have their kindness despised, and set at nought, is what men would above all things resent. How heinous then is it, and how exceedingly provoking to God must it be, thus to set at nought so great kindness and love of CHRIST, when from love to sinners he suffered so much?

CONSIDER how highly the angels who are so much above you, do set by the glory and excellency of Christ, by which you set nothing. They admire and adore the glory of Christ, and cease not day nor night to praise the same in the most exalted strains. Rev. v, 11. 12. "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, worthy is the lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." The saints admire the excellency of Christ, and the glorious angels admire it, and every creature in heaven and earth, but only you unbelieving children of men.

CONSIDER not only how much the angels set by the glory of Christ, but how much God himself sets by it: for he is the darling of heaven, he was eternally God's delight; and because of his glory God hath thought

thought him worthy to be appointed the heir of all things, and hath seen fit to ordain that all men *should honour the son even as they honour the father*.----Is he thus worthy of the infinite esteem and love of God himself? and is he worthy of no esteem from you?

2. **HEREBY** you may be convinced of your danger. You must needs think, that such guilt will bring great wrath: doubtless God is dreadfully provoked by your thus despising Jesus Christ. Dreadful destruction is denounced in scripture against those that despise only the disciples of Christ; Mat. xviii. 6. What destruction then will come on them that despise all the glorious excellency of Christ himself!

CONSIDER that you not only have no value for all the glory and excellency of Christ; but you are enemies to him on that very account. The very ground of that enmity and opposition which there is between your hearts and Jesus Christ, is the glorious perfections and excellencies that there are in Jesus Christ. By being such an holy and excellent Saviour, he is contrary to your lusts and corruptions: If there were a Saviour offered to you that was agreeable to your corrupt nature, such a Saviour you would fall in with the offer of; such a Saviour you would accept. But Christ being a Saviour of such purity, holiness, and divine perfection, this is the cause why you have no inclination to him, but are offended in him.

INSTEAD of being a precious stone in your eyes, he is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to you. That he is a Saviour who hath manifested such divine perfections in what he hath done and suffered, is one principal reason why you set nothing by him.---Consider how provoking this must needs be to God the Father, who has given his only begotten son for your salvation; and what wrath it merits from the son whom you thus treat. And consider how you will hereafter bear this wrath.

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CONSIDER that however Christ be set at nought by you, yet he shall be the head of the corner, and that even with respect to you. Though you set him low, yet he shall be exalted with respect to you. It is but a vain thing for you to make light of Christ and treat him with contempt. How much soever you contemn him, you cannot break his bands asunder, nor cast his cords from you. You will still be in his hands. While you despise Christ, God will despise you, and the Lord will have you in derision. God will set his king on his holy hill of Zion in spite of all his enemies : Psal. ii. 1-----6. Though you say we will not have this man to reign over us, yet Christ will rule over you : Psal. cx. 2. "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." If you will not submit to the sceptre of his grace, you shall be subject to the rod of his wrath, and he will rule you with a rod of iron : Psal. ii. 9, 10, 11, 12.

3. You may hence be led to see how worthless many of those things in yourselves are, that you have been ready to make much of. Particularly, if it be so that you set nothing by all the glory of Christ, then what are those desires that you have after Christ, good for ? and that willingness that you think you find, to come to Christ ? ---- Sinners are often wont to excuse themselves in their unbelief with this, that they see not but that they are willing to come to Christ and would gladly come to him if they could, and have great desires to come to him. And they make much of such a willingness and such desires, as though God were unjust to punish them for not coming to Christ, when they would gladly come to Christ if they could. But this doctrine shows that your willingness and desires to come to Christ, are not worthy to be mentioned as any excuse : for they are

from any respect to Christ, but are merely forced : you at the same time set Christ at nought ; or set nothing by all his excellency and glory.

So you may hence learn the worthlessness of all your pains and endeavours after Christ. When sinners have taken a great deal of pains to get an interest in Christ, they are wont to make a righteousness of it ; little considering that at the very time they are taking so much pains to get an interest in Christ, they set nothing at all by Christ, for any glory or excellency that there is in him ; but set him wholly at nought, and seek him out of respect to their own interest.

4. HENCE learn how justly God might for ever refuse to give you an interest in Christ. For why should God give you any part or interest in him whom you set at nought, all whose glory and excellency you value not in the least, but rather trample it under your feet, and prefer the dirt before it.

WHY should God ever give you any interest in him whom you so despise ? seeing you despise him, how justly might you be obliged to go without any interest in him ! How justly might you be refused any part in that precious stone, whose preciousness you make no account of, and esteem no more than that of the stones of the street ! — Is God obliged to cast such a pearl before swine who will trample it under their feet ? Is God obliged to make you possessors of his infinitely glorious and dear son, when at the same time you count him not worth the having, for the sake of any worth or excellency that there is in him ; but merely because you cannot escape hell without him ?

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S E R M O N * IV.

The Folly of looking back, in fleeing
out of Sodom.

L U K E, xvii. 32.

Remember Lots Wife.

CHRIST is here foretelling his coming in his kingdom, in answer to the question which the Pharisees asked him, viz. *When the kingdom of God should come.* And in what he says of his coming, he evidently has respect to two things, his coming at the destruction of Jerusalem, and his coming to the general judgment, at the end of the world. He compares his coming at those times, to the coming of God in two remarkable judgments that were past; first to that in the time of the flood; "and as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the son of man." Nextly he compares it to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: "likewise also, as it was in the days of Lot---even thus shall it be in the day when the son of man is revealed."

THEN he immediately proceeds to direct his people how they should behave themselves at the appearance

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* DATED MAY 1735.

pearance of the signal of the approach of that day, referring especially to the destruction of Jerusalem. "In that day, he which shall be upon the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away : and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back." In which words Christ shows that they should make the utmost haste to flee and get out of the city to the mountains, as he commands Mat. xxiv. 15. &c. "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place, then let them which be in Judea, flee to the mountains ; let him which is in the house-top, not come down to take any thing out of the house ; neither let him which is in the field, turn back to take his clothes."

JERUSALEM was like Sodom in that it was devoted to destruction, by special divine wrath, as that was ; and indeed to a more terrible destruction than Sodom was. Therefore the like direction is given concerning fleeing out of it with the utmost haste, without looking behind, as the angel gave to Lot, when he bid him flee out of Sodom ; Gen. xix. 17. "Escape for thy life ; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain."-----And in the text Christ enforces his council by the instance of Lot's wife. He bids them remember her and take warning by her, who looked back as she was fleeing out of Sodom, and became a pillar of salt.

If it be inquired why Christ gave this direction to his people to flee out of Jerusalem, in such exceeding haste, at the first notice of the signal of her approaching destruction ; I answer, it seems to be because fleeing out of Jerusalem was a type of fleeing out of a state of sin. Escaping out of that unbelieving city typified

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typified an escape out of a state of unbelief. Therefore they were directed to flee without staying to take any thing out of their houses, to signify with what haste and greatness of concern, we should flee out of a natural condition, that no respect to any worldly enjoyment should prevent or delay us one moment, and that we should flee to Jesus Christ the refuge of souls, our strong rock, and the mount of our defence, so as in fleeing to him, to leave and forsake heartily all earthly things.

THIS seems to be the chief reason also, why Lot was directed to make such haste, and not to look behind ; because his fleeing out of Sodom was designed on purpose to be a type of our fleeing from that state of sin and misery in which we naturally are.

DOCTRINE. We ought not to look back, when we are fleeing out of Sodom.----The following reasons may be sufficient to support this doctrine ;

I. THAT Sodom is a city full of filthiness and abominations. It is a filthy and abominable city ; it is full of those impurities that are worthy to be had in the utmost abhorrence and detestation by all. The inhabitants of it are a polluted company, they are all under the power and dominion of hateful lusts. All their faculties and affections are polluted with those vile dispositions that are unworthy of the human nature, that greatly debase it, that are exceedingly hateful to God and dreadfully incense his anger. Every kind of spiritual abomination abounds in it : in Sodom there is all filthiness that can be thought of. There is nothing so hateful and abominable but that there it is to be found and there it abounds.

SODOM is a city full of devils and all unclean spirits : there they have their rendezvous, and there they have their dominion. There they and those that are like

like unto them, do sport and wallow themselves in filthiness; as it is said of mystical Babylon, Rev. xviii. 2. Babylon---is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird.----- Who would be of such a society? who would not flee from such a city with the utmost haste, and never look back upon it, and never have the least inclination of returning, or having any thing to do there any more?

SOME in Sodom may seem to carry a fair face and make a fair outward show; but if we could look into their hearts, they are every one altogether filthy and abominable. We ought to flee from such a city, with the utmost abhorrence of the place and society, with no desires to dwell longer there, and never to discover the least inclination to return to it; but should be desirous to get to the greatest possible distance from it, that we might in no wise be partakers in her abominations.

2. WE ought not to look back, when fleeing out of Sodom, because Sodom is a city appointed to destruction. The cry of the city hath reached up to heaven. The earth cannot bear such a burden as her inhabitants are; she will therefore disburden herself of them, and spue them out. God will not suffer such a city to stand; he will consume it. God is an holy God and his nature is infinitely opposite to all such uncleanness as Sodom is full of; he will therefore be a consuming fire to it. The holiness of God will not suffer it to stand, and the majesty and justice of God require that the inhabitants of that city, who thus offend and provoke him, be destroyed. And God will surely destroy them; it is the immutable and irreversible decree of God. He hath said it and he will do it. The decree is gone forth, and so sure as there

a God, and he is almighty and able to fulfil his decrees and threatenings, so surely will he destroy Sodom. Gen. xix. 12, 13. "Whatsoever thou hast in this city bring them out of this place; for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it." And verse. 14. Up, get ye out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city."

This city is an accursed city; it is destined to ru-

Therefore as we would not be partakers of her curse, and would not be destroyed, we should flee out of it and not look behind us. Rev. xviii. 4. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

3. We ought not to look back when fleeing out of Sodom, because the destruction to which it is appointed, is exceedingly dreadful: it is appointed to utter destruction, to be wholly and entirely consum-

It is appointed to suffer the wrath of the great God, which is to be poured down from God upon it, like a dreadful storm of fire and brimstone. This city is to be filled full of the wrath of God. Every one that remains in it shall have the fire of God's wrath come down on his head and into his soul: he shall be full of fire and full of the wrath of the almighty.---He shall be encompassed with fire without and full of fire within: his head, his heart, his bowels and all his limbs shall be full of fire, and not drop of water to cool him.

Nor shall he have any place to flee to for relief. No where he will, there is the fire of God's wrath: his destruction and torment will be inevitable.---He shall be destroyed without any pity. He shall cry aloud, but there shall be none to help, there shall be none to regard

regard his lamentations, or to afford relief. The decree is gone forth, and the days come when Sodom shall burn as an oven, and all the inhabitants thereof shall be as stubble. As it was in the literal Sodom, the whole city was full of fire: in their houses there was no safety, for they were all on fire; and if they fled out into the streets, they also were full of fire. Fire continually came down out of heaven every where.-----That was a dismal time. What a cry was there then in that city, in every-part of it! But there was none to help; they had no where to go, where they could hide their heads from fire: They had none to pity or relieve them. If they fled to their friends, they could not help them.

Now with what haste should we flee from a city appointed to such a destruction! and how should we flee without looking behind us! how should it be our whole intent, and what we with all our minds and might are engaged about, to get at the greatest distance from a city in such circumstances! how far should we be from thinking at all of returning to a city which has such wrath hanging over it!

4. THE destruction to which Sodom is appointed is an universal destruction. None that stay in it shall escape: none will have the good fortune, to be in any by-corner, where the fire will not search them out. All sorts, old and young, great and small shall be destroyed. There shall be no exception of any age, or any sex, or any condition, but all shall perish together. Gen. xix. 24, 25. "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven, and he overthrew those cities and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." We therefore must not longer

lay or look behind us ; for there is no place of safety in Sodom, nor in all the plain on which Sodom is built. The mountain of safety is before us and not behind us.

5. THE destruction to which Sodom is appointed is an everlasting destruction. This is said of the literal Sodom, that it suffered the vengeance of eternal fire, Jude vii. " Even as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." ---- That destruction that Sodom and Gomorrah suffered, was an eternal destruction : those cities were destroyed and have never been built since, and are not capable of being rebuilt ; for the land on which they stood, at the time of their destruction sunk and has been ever since covered with the lake of Sodom or the dead sea, or as it is called in scripture, *the salt sea*. This seems to have been thus ordered on purpose to be a type of the eternal destruction of ungodly men. So that fire by which they were destroyed, is called *eternal fire*, because it was so typically, it was a type of the eternal destruction of ungodly men ; which may be in part what is intended, when it is said in that text in Jude, that they were set forth for an example, or for a type or representation of the eternal fire in which all the ungodly are to be consumed.

SODOM has in all ages since been covered with a lake which was first brought on it by fire and brimstone, to be a type of the lake of fire and brimstone in which ungodly men shall have their part forever and ever, as we read Rev. xx. 15. and elsewhere.

WE ought not therefore to look back when fleeing out of Sodom, seeing that the destruction to which

which it is appointed is an eternal destruction ; for this renders the destruction truly infinitely dreadful.

6. SODOM is a city appointed to swift and sudden destruction. The destruction is not only certain and inevitable, and infinitely dreadful, but it will come speedily. " Their judgment lingereth not, and their damnation flumbereth not" ; 2. Pet. ii. 3. And so Deut. xxxii. 35. " The day of their calamity is at hand and the things that shall come upon them, make haste." — The storm of wrath, the black clouds of divine vengeance even now every moment hang over them, just ready to break forth and come down in a dreadful manner upon them. God hath already whet his sword and bent his bow, and made ready his arrow on the string : Psal. vii. 12. — Therefore we should make haste and not look behind us. For if we linger and stop to look back, and stop not for our lives, there is great danger that we shall be involved in the common ruin.

THE destruction of SODOM is not only swift, but will come suddenly and unexpectedly. — It seems to have been a fair morning in Sodom, on the morning that it was destroyed. There is notice taken of the time when the sun rose that morning : Gen. xix. 2. It seems that there were no clouds to be seen, no appearance of any storm at all, much less of a storm of fire and brimstone. The inhabitants of Sodom expected no such thing : even when Lot told his sons-in-law of it, they would not believe it ; Gen. xix. 14. They were making merry ; their hearts were at ease ; they thought nothing of such a calamity at hand. But it came at once, as travail upon a woman with child, and there was no escape ; as it is observed in the context v. 28, 29. " They did eat, they drank ; they bought, they sold ; they planted, they built ;

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“ed: but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom,
“it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and de-
“stroy them all.”

So it is with wicked men; Psal. lxxiii. 19. “How
“are they brought into desolation in a moment:
“they are utterly consumed with terrors.”——
If therefore we linger and look back, we may be sud-
denly overtaken and seized with destruction.

7. THERE is nothing in Sodom that is worth
looking back upon. All the enjoyments of Sodom
will soon perish in the common destruction. All
will be burnt up. And surely it is not worth the
while to look back on things that are perishing and
consuming in the flames, as it is with all the enjoy-
ments of sin; they are all appointed to the fire.
Therefore it is foolish for any who are fleeing out of
Sodom, to hanker any more after them; for when they
are burnt up, what good can they do? And is it
worth the while for us to return back for the sake of
a moment's enjoyment of them, before they are burnt,
and so expose ourselves to be burnt up with them?

Lot's wife looked back because she remembered
the pleasant things that she left in Sodom. She hat-
ed to leave them; she hankered after them; she
could not but look back with a wishful eye upon
the city, where she had lived in such ease and plea-
sure.-----Sodom was a place of great outward plenty;
they ate the fat and drank the sweet. The soil where
Sodom was built was exceedingly fruitful; it is said to
be as *the garden of God*, Gen. xii. 10. And *fullness of
bread* was one of the sins of the place; Ezek. xvi. 49.

HERE Lot and his wife lived plentifully, and it
was a place where the inhabitants wallowed in carnal
pleasures and delights. But however much it a-
bonded in these things, what were they worth now,
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when the city was burning? Lot's wife was very foolish in lingering in her escape, for the sake of things which were all on fire.-----So the enjoyments, the profits and pleasures of sin, have the wrath and curse of God on them: brimstone is scattered on them: hell-fire is ready to kindle on them. It is not therefore worth while for any person to look back after such things.

8. WE are warned by messengers sent to us from God to make haste in our flight from Sodom, and not to look behind us. God sends to us his ministers, the angels of the churches, on this grand errand, as he sent the angels to warn Lot and his wife to flee for their lives, and to say and do as we have account in Gen. xix. 15, 16.----If we delay or look back, now that we have had such fair warning, we shall be exceedingly inexcusable and monstrously foolish.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

THE use that I would make of this doctrine is to warn those who are in a natural condition to flee out of it, and by no means to look back. While you are out of Christ, you are in Sodom. The whole history of the destruction of Sodom with all its circumstances seems to be inserted in the scriptures for our warning and is set forth for an example, as the apostle Jude says. It in a lively manner typifies the case of natural men, the destruction of those that continue in a natural state, and the manner of their escape, who flee to Christ. The psalmist when speaking of the appointed punishment of ungodly men seems evidently to refer to the destruction of Sodom in Psal. xi. 6. "Upon the wicked God shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup."

CONSIDER therefore what the state is, that you are to get out of, you that are seeking an interest in Christ : you are to flee out of Sodom. Sodom is the place of your nativity, and the place where you have spent your lives hitherto. You are citizens of that city, which is full of filthiness and abomination before God, that polluted and accursed city. You belong to that impure society. You not only live among them, but you are of them, you are some that have committed those abominations, and have so provoked God as you have heard. It is you that I have all this while been speaking of under this doctrine ; you are the inhabitants of Sodom. Perhaps you may look on your circumstances, as not very dreadful ; but you dwell in Sodom.-----Though you may be reformed and appear with a clean outside and a smooth face to the world ; yet as long as you are in a natural condition, you are impure inhabitants of Sodom.

THE world of mankind is divided into two companies, or as I may say, into two cities : there is the city of Zion, the church of God, the holy and beloved city ; and there is Sodom that polluted and accursed city, which is appointed to destruction. You belong to the latter of these. How much soever you may look upon yourselves better than some others, yet you are of the same city ; the same company, with fornicators, and drunkards, and adulterers, and common swearers, and high-way-men, and pirates, and Sodomites. How much soever you may think yourselves distinguished, as long as you are out of Christ, you belong to the very same society ; you are of the same company, you join with them, and are no better than they, any otherwise than as you have greater restraints. You are considered in the sight of God, as fit to be linked with them. You and they are altogether the objects of the loathing and abhorrence of God, and have

have the wrath of God abiding on you ; you will go with them and be destroyed with them, if you do not escape from your present state. Yea you are of the same society and the same company with the devils, for Sodom is not only the city of wicked men, but it is the hold of every foul spirit.

You belong to that city that is appointed to an awful, inevitable, universal, swift and sudden destruction ; a city that has a storm of fire and wrath hanging over it. Many of you are convinced of the awful state you are in, while in Sodom, and are making some attempts to escape from the wrath which hangs over it. Let such be warned by what hath been said to escape for their lives and not to look back. Look not back unless you choose to have a share in the burning tempest that is coming down on that city.----Look not back in remembrance of the enjoyments which you have had in Sodom, as hankering after the pleasant things which you have had there, after the ease, the security, and the pleasure which you have there enjoyed.

REMEMBER Lot's wife, for she looked back, as being loath utterly and forever to leave the ease, the pleasure and plenty which she enjoyed in Sodom, and as having a mind to return to them again : remember what became of her.-----Remember the children of Israel in the wilderness, who were desirous of going back again into Egypt, because they remembered the leeks and onions &c. of Egypt Num. xi. 5. " We remember the flesh which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick."-----Remember what was the issue of their hankering. You must be willing for ever to leave all the ease, and pleasure, and profit of sin, to forsake all for salvation, as Lot forsook all and left all he had to escape out of Sodom.

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S E R M O N V.

The Folly of looking back, in fleeing
out of Sodom.

L U K E, xvii. 32.

Remember Lot's Wife.

DOCTRINE. We ought not to look back,
when we are fleeing out of Sodom.

HAVING confirmed this doctrine by several reasons, we come to the application of it in an use of warning to sinners in a natural state, and especially to those who are awakened and convinced of the awful state in which they are, and are desirous of escaping the wrath which is to come. And further to enforce this warning, let me entreat all you who are in this state, to consider these several things which I shall now mention ;

I. THE destruction of which you are in danger is infinitely more dreadful than that destruction of the literal Sodom from which Lot fled. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in a storm of fire and brimstone, was but a shadow of the destruction of ungodly men in hell, and is no more to it than a shadow or a picture is to a reality, or than painted fire is to real fire. The misery of hell is set forth by various

rious shadows and images in scripture, as blackness of darkness, a never dying worm, a furnace of fire, a lake of fire and brimstone, the torments of the valley of the son of Hinnom, a storm of fire and brimstone. The reason why so many similitudes are made use of, is because none of them are sufficient. Any one does but partly and very imperfectly represent the truth, and therefore God makes use of many.

You have therefore much more need to make haste in your escape, and not to look behind you, than Lot and his wife had when they fled out of Sodom; for you are every day and every moment in danger of a thousand times more dreadful storm coming on your heads, than that which came on Sodom, when the Lord rained brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven upon them; so that it will be vastly more sottish in you to look back, than it was in Lot's wife.

2. THE destruction you are in danger of, is not only greater than the temporal destruction of Sodom, but greater than the eternal destruction of the inhabitants of Sodom. For however well you may think you have behaved yourselves, you who have continued impenitent under the glorious gospel, have sinned more and provoked God far more, and have greater guilt upon you, than the inhabitants of Sodom; although you may seem to yourselves, and perhaps to others, to be very harmless creatures. Mat. x. 15. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

3. MULTITUDES while they have been looking back, have been suddenly overtaken and seized by the storm of wrath. The wrath of God hath not delayed, while they have delayed; it has not waited at all for them to repent, to turn about and flee; but has presently seized them, and they have been past hope

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hope.-----When Lot's wife looked back she was immediately destroyed, God had exercised patience towards her before. When she lingered at the setting out, the angels pressed her, her husband and children, to make haste. Not only so, but when they yet delayed, they laid hold on her hands, and brought her forth and set her without the city, the Lord being merciful to her. But now when notwithstanding this mercy and the warnings which had been given her, she looked back, God exercised no more patience towards her, but proceeded in wrath immediately to put her to death.

Now God has in like manner been merciful to you. You in time past have been lingering; you have been warned by the angel of your danger and pressed to make haste and flee; yet you have delayed. And now at length God hath as it were laid hold on you, by the convictions of his spirit, to draw you out of Sodom; Therefore *remember Lot's wife*. If now after all you should look back, when God hath been so merciful to you; you will have reason to fear, that God will suddenly destroy you and wait no longer on you. Multitudes when they have been looking back and putting off to another opportunity, they have never had another opportunity; they have been suddenly destroyed and that without remedy.

4. If you look back and live long after it, there will be great danger that you will never get any further. The only way to seek salvation is to press forward with all your might, and still to look and press forward, never to stand still or slacken your pace.-----When Lot's wife stopped in her flight, and stood still in order that she might look, her punishment was that there she was to stand forever, she never got any farther; she never got beyond that place; but there

there she stood as a pillar of salt, a durable pillar and monument of wrath, for her folly and wickedness.

So it very often is with backsliders, though they may live a considerable time after. When they look back, after they have been taking pains for their salvation, they lose all, they put themselves under vast disadvantages; by quenching the spirit of God, and losing their convictions, they dreadfully harden their own hearts and stupify their souls, make way for discouragements, dreadfully strengthen and establish the interest of sin in their hearts, many ways give Satan great advantages to ruin them, and provoke God oftentimes utterly to leave them to hardness of heart. When they come to look back, their souls presently become dead and hard like Lot's wife's body: and if this be the case, though they live long after, they never get any further; it is worse for them, than if they were immediately damned. When persons in fleeing out of Sodom look back, their last case is far worse than the first; Mat. xii. 43, 44, 45.-----And experience confirms that none ordinarily are so hard to be brought to repentance as backsliders.

5. It may well stir you up to flee for your lives, and not to look behind you, when you consider, how many have lately fled to the mountain, while you yet remain in Sodom. To what multitudes hath God given the wisdom to flee to CHRIST the mountain of safety! They have fled to the little city Zoar, which God will spare and never destroy. How many have you seen of all sorts resorting out of Sodom thither, as believing the word of God by the angels, that God would surely destroy that place. They are in a safe condition; they are got out of the reach of the storm, the fire and brimstone can do them no hurt there.

BUT you yet remain in that cursed city among the

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accursed company. You are yet in Sodom, which God is about so terribly to destroy, where you are in danger every minute of having snares, fire and brimstone come down on your head.-----Though so many have obtained, yet you have not obtained deliverance. Good has come, but you have seen none of it. Others are happy, but no one knows what will become of you: you have no part nor lot in that glorious salvation of souls, which has lately been among us.-----The consideration of this should stir you up effectually to escape, and in your escape to press forward; still to press forward, and to resolve to press forward for ever, let what will be in the way, to hearken to no temptation, and never to look back, or in any wise slacken or abate your endeavours as long as you live, but if possible to increase in them more and more.

6. BACKSLIDING after such a time as this, * will have a vastly greater tendency to seal a man's damnation, than at another time. The greater means men have, the louder calls and the greater advantages they are under, the more dangerous is backsliding, the more it has a tendency to enhance guilt, to provoke God and to harden the heart.

WE in this land of light, have long enjoyed greater advantages, than the most of the world. But the advantages which persons are under now for their salvation, are perhaps tenfold to what they have been at such times as we have ordinarily lived in; and backsliding will be proportionably the greater sin, and the more dangerous to the soul.-----You have seen God's glory and his wonders amongst us, in a most marvellous manner of late. If therefore you look back after this, there will be great danger that God will swear in his wrath, that you shall never enter into his rest;

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* The time of the revival of religion at Northampton, A. D. 1735.

as God swore concerning them that were for going back into Egypt, after they had seen the wonders which God wrought for Israel. Num. xiv. 22, 23, "Because all those men that have seen my glory and my miracles that I did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers neither shall any of them that provoked me, see it."---The wonders that we have seen among us of late, have been of a more glorious nature, than those that the children of Israel saw in Egypt and in the wilderness.

7. WE know not but that great part of the wicked world, are at this day, in Sodom's circumstances, when Lot fled out of it; having some outward, temporal destruction hanging over it. It looks as if some great thing were coming; the state of things in the world seems to be ripe for some great revolution. The world has got to such a terrible degree of wickedness, that it is probable that the cry of it has by this time reached up to heaven; and it is hardly probable that God will suffer things to go on, as they now do, much longer. It is likely that God will ere long appear in awful majesty to vindicate his own cause; and then none will be safe that are out of CHRIST. Now therefore every one should flee for his life, and escape to the mountain, lest he be consumed.---We cannot certainly tell what God is about to do, but this we may know, that those who are out of CHRIST, are in a most unsafe state,

8. To enforce this warning against looking back, let me beseech you to consider the exceeding proneness which there is in the heart to it. The heart of man is a backsliding heart, There is in the heart a great

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great love and hankering desire after the ease, pleasure and enjoyments of Sodom, as there was in Lot's wife, by which persons are continually liable to temptations to look back. The heart is so much towards Sodom, that it is a difficult thing to keep the eye from turning that way, and the feet from tending thither. When men under convictions are put upon fleeing, it is a mere force, it is because God lays hold on their hands, as he did on Lot's and his wife's, and drags them so far. But the tendency of the heart is to go back to Sodom again.

PERSONS are very prone to back-sliding, also thro' discouragement. They are apt to be discouraged. The heart is unsteady, soon tired, soon gives out, is apt to listen to discouraging temptations. A little difficulty and delay soon overcome it's feeble resolutions. And discouragement tends to backsliding: it weakens persons hands, lies as a dead weight on their hearts, and makes them drag heavily; and if it continue long, it very often issues in security and senselessness. Convictions are often shaken off that way: they begin first to go off with discouragement.

BACKSLIDING is a disease that is exceeding secret in its way of working. It is a flattering distemper; it works like a consumption, wherein persons often flatter themselves that they are not worse, but something better, and in a hopeful way to recover, till a few days before they die. So backsliding commonly comes on gradually and steals on men insensibly, and they still flatter themselves that they are not backslidden. They plead that they are seeking yet, and they hope they have not lost their convictions. And by the time they find it out, and cannot pretend so any longer, they are commonly so far gone, that they are not much if they have lost their convictions.

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And when it is come to that, it is commonly a gone case with persons as to those convictions.

Thus they blind themselves, and keep themselves insensible of their own disease, and so are not terrified with it, nor awakened to use means for relief, till it is past cure.

Thus it is that backsliding commonly comes upon persons, that have for some time, been under any considerable convictions, and afterwards lose them. Let the consideration of this your danger excite you to the greatest care and diligence to keep your hearts, and to watchfulness and constant prayer against backsliding.----And let it put you upon endeavours to strengthen your resolutions of persevering and guarding against every thing that tends to the contrary, that you may indeed hold out to the end, for *then shall you know, if you follow on to know the Lord.*

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S E R M O N * VI.

The Warnings of Scripture are in the best manner adapted to the awakening and conversion of Sinners.

L U K E xvi. 31.

And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

WE here have an account how the rich man in hell, after he had in vain begged of Abraham to send Lazarus to his own relief, and saw that there was no relief for him; prays that Lazarus may be sent to his brethren, to warn them, that they might take care for their salvation, and escape that place of torment.----By the way, it may be proper to remark, that we cannot from this conclude, that the damned will have any workings of natural affection to their near relations in this world, or any concern for their salvation. The design of CHRIST was only parabolically to represent what different thoughts worldly and wicked men will have of things, when they

they shall be in hell, from what they have while upon earth. The rich man, when he was upon earth, only minded his honour, ease and pleasure, and did not think it worth while to take care of his soul, and to be at much pains to escape hell. But now he is of another mind, and is sensible that if his five brethren, who live in the same careless neglect of their souls as he did, knew what hell is, they would take more care.

BUT this seems to be put into the parable chiefly to introduce what follows, the reply which Abraham made to him, *They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.* As much as to say, They have already abundant warning and instruction, which God himself hath provided for them, let them make use of that.

THE rich man replies, *Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.* Then come in the words of the text, And he said unto him, *If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.* By Moses and the prophets is meant the whole old testament, which was the whole canon of scripture, which they had in those times. The hearing of them implies attending to what they say, believing them, and obeying them. *They would not be persuaded*, that is, they would not be persuaded to take thorough care of their souls, to forsake their sins and turn to God, so as to avoid this place of torments. *Though one rose from the dead*; though one should go from the invisible world, either from heaven, where they see the torments of the damned, or from hell, where they feel them.

DOCTRINE. THE warnings of God's word are more fitted to obtain the ends of awakening sinners, and bringing them to repentance, than the rising of one from the dead to warn them.

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In this passage Moses and the prophets seem not only to be equalized to the warnings of one from the invisible world; but to be preferred before them. They have Moses and the prophets let them hear them; they have already those means, which God in his infinite wisdom hath seen to be fittest for them, and more suitable to their nature and circumstances, than the rising of one from the dead, --- But whether there can be any more than an equality necessarily inferred, or not; yet if only the warnings of the old testament have an equal tendency to bring men to repentance, as the rising of one from the dead; then surely these together with the much clearer revelation under the gospel dispensation by CHRIST and his apostles, wherein we are abundantly more plainly told of another world, and wherein life and immortality are brought to light; must have a much greater tendency and fitness to obtain these ends.

SINNERS are apt to find fault with the means of grace which they enjoy, and to say with themselves, If I had ever seen hell, or had ever heard the cries of the damned, or had ever seen a person who had felt hell-torments, or had seen them at a distance; that would awaken me; then I would forsake all my sins, and would do whatever I could to escape hell. But now I am only told of hell in the bible and by ministers; and there never was any in this world that saw or felt it. So that I am ready to think it is mere delusion and fancy. How do I know that there is any hell? How do I know, but that when I die, there will be an end of me?

BUT it is the indisposition of sinners to this great work, to which they are directed, which makes them find fault with their means and advantages. The slothful and negligent, who hate to bestir themselves, will

will be objecting. "The way of the slothful is as an
 "hedge of thorns."-----Sinners know not what they
 would have. They are fixedly averse to breaking
 off their sins by righteousness; and to make the mat-
 ter the more excusable, they object against the suffi-
 ciency of their means, and so they will not believe, ex-
 cept they see hell, or see some person, who has seen it.

BUT GOD who knows our nature and circumstan-
 ces, knows what is most adapted to them. He who
 made the faculties of our souls, knows what will have
 the greatest tendency to move them and to work up-
 on them. He who is striving with us, to bring us
 to repentance and salvation, uses the fittest and best
 means. In contriving and appointing the means of
 our salvation, he chooses better for us than we should
 for ourselves.

IF a person should rise from the dead to warn sin-
 ners, coming from heaven, where they see the misery
 of the damned, or from hell, where they feel it; and
 should tell sinners how dismal those torments are,
 should set them out as well as he would be under ad-
 vantages to do, having seen or felt them, and should
 confirm what he said by telling that he had seen the
 smoke of their torments, had seen the raging of the
 flames, had seen the dreadful crew of devils and dam-
 ned souls together, and had heard their dismal cries
 and shrieks; or should say that he had felt them, and
 should express by words and actions the doleful state
 of the damned and the extremity of their torments
 such a thing as this would probably greatly frighten
 and terrify many sinners, who were not terrified by
 reading the bible, nor by hearing preaching about
 hell torments. But it would be very much because
 of the unusualness and strangeness of the thing. Men
 are apt to be much affected with strange things, and

to be much affrighted by spectres in the dark, because they are unusual. But if they were as common as preaching is, they would lose their effect.

It might be that on such an unusual occasion, as the rising of one from the dead, for a while men would reform their lives, and possibly some might be so affected, as never to forget it. But we are to consider, which would have the greatest tendency to awaken us, if both were alike new and unusual, to be warned of the misery of hell by the great God himself, declaring as it were from heaven, how dreadful hell is, and abundantly warning us about it; or to be warned only by a man coming from the invisible world, who had either seen or felt these miseries. It is in this view that we shall consider the matter; and we shall show what advantages the former mode of warning has above the latter: or how the warnings of God's word have a greater tendency to awaken sinners and bring them to repentance, than the rising of one from the dead to warn them.

1. God, in many respects, knows better what belongs to the punishment of sinners than departed souls. Departed souls doubtless know what hell-torments are, much better than any on earth. The souls of the wicked feel them, and the souls of the saints see them afar off. God glorifies his justice in the punishment of ungodly men, in the view of the saints and angels, and thereby makes them the more admire the riches of his goodness in choosing them to life. As the rich man saw Lazarus in heaven afar off, so Lazarus saw the rich man in hell; he saw hell-torments; and therefore the rich man desires he may be sent to warn his brethren.-----And if one should rise from the dead, to warn wicked men, if it would at all awaken them, it would be because he knew what

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hell-torments were, by his own knowledge, and could describe them to others, as having seen and felt them.

BUT surely the all seeing God knows as well as any of the dead, what the present sufferings of the damned are. He is every where present with his all-seeing eye. He is in heaven and in hell, and in and through every part of the creation. He is where every devil is, and where every damned soul is; he is present by his knowledge and his essence. He not only knows as well as those in heaven, who see at a distance; but he knows as perfectly as those who feel the misery. He seeth into the innermost recesses of the hearts of those miserable spirits. He seeth all the sorrow and anguish that are there, for he upholds them in being. They and all the powers of their spirits, whereby they are capable of either happiness or misery, are in his hands.

BESIDES, it is his wrath that they endure: he measures out to them their several portions of punishment; he makes his wrath enter into them; he is a consuming fire to them; his anger is that fire, in which they are tormented. He therefore is doubtless able to give us as clear and distinct, and as true an account of hell, as the damned themselves, if they should rise from the dead. He needs not any to inform him.

HE knows far better what the eternity of those torments is, than any of them. He can better tell us how awful a thing eternity is. He knows better what the future judgment of sinners will be, when the LORD JESUS shall come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel. He knows far better than they, how much the torment of the wicked will then be increased.

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God's testimony, than we could have it from the testimony of one rising from the dead. If there should one rise from the dead and should tell us of the dreadfulfulness of hell torments; how precarious a foundation would that be to build upon, in a matter of such importance, unless we consider it as confirmed by divine testimony. We should be uncertain, whether there were not some delusion in the case. We know that it is impossible for God to lie; and we may know that the matter is just as he declares it to us. But if one should come from the dead, we could not be so sure, that we were no way imposed upon. We could not be so sure that he who testified was not himself subject to some delusion. We could not be sure that the matter was not strained too high, and represented greater than it really is.

ONE coming from the dead could not, merely by force of his own testimony, make us sure that we should come to that place of torments, if we did not repent and reform. And if there should come more witnesses than one from the dead; if there should be ever so many; yet there is no authority equal to that of God; there is no testimony of spirits from the invisible world, which would be so indisputable and unquestionable, as the divine testimony. How could we know, unless by some divine revelation, that they who should come from the dead, had not come to deceive us? How could we know how wicked, or how good they were, and upon what views they acted?

WHEREAS we have the greatest ground to be assured, that the first being, and the fountain of all being and perfection, is; nothing but light and truth itself, and therefore that it is impossible he should deceive or be deceived.

3. THE warnings of God's word have greatly the

the advantage, by reason of the greatness and majesty of him, who speaks. The speeches and declarations of those, who are great, excellent and honourable, have a greater tendency to move the affections, than the declarations of others, who are less excellent. Things spoken by a king affect more than the same things spoken by a mean man.

BUT God is infinitely greater than kings ; he is universal king of heaven and earth, the absolute sovereign of all things. Now what can have a greater tendency to strike the mind and move the heart, than to be warned by this great and glorious being ? shall we be unmoved when he speaks, who made heaven and earth by the word of his power ; he who keeps the sun, moon and stars in their courses ? If his immediate speeches, declarations and warnings will not influence us, what will ? Isai. i. 2, " Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the LORD hath spoken."----That is to the present purpose which we have in Mat. xxi. 37. " But last of all he sent his son, saying, They will reverence my son." He sent his servants before, but they did not regard them. He therefore sent his son, who was a much greater and more honourable messenger, and said surely they will regard him.

WHAT if God should send messengers from the dead to warn us, and many in succession, and men should reject them ; we should justly argue that it would have a much greater tendency to make men regard and obey the counsel, if he would send his son or come himself. But God hath sent his son, and therein he hath come himself. He came down from heaven and took upon him our nature, and dwelt among us teaching and warning us concerning hell and damnation.

In the bible we not only have those warnings, which were given by inspiration of the prophets; but we have God's own words, which he spake as it were by his own mouth. In the old testament is his voice out of the midst of the fire and the darkness, from mount Sinai. And in the new testament we have God speaking to us, as dwelling among us. He came down from heaven and instructed us in a familiar manner, for a long while; and we have his instructions recorded in our bibles.-----Now which has the greatest tendency to influence men, to have one of the departed spirits sent back into its body, to warn them; or to have God himself assume a body, and come and warn them?

4. It more evidently shows the importance of the affair, that God should immediately concern himself in it, than the coming of one from the dead would do. Those things about which kings most immediately concern themselves, are commonly matters of the greatest importance, while they leave less concerns to be managed by their officers. And surely that must be a matter of very great moment, in which God shows himself so much concerned, as he does in our salvation. God in all ages of the world hath showed himself very much concerned in this matter. How abundantly hath he warned us in his holy word? How earnest hath he shown himself in it? How many arguments and exhortations hath he used, that we might avoid the way to hell?

THIS evidently argues that what we are warned about is a matter of the utmost concern, and proves it much more than if we were only warned by one rising from the dead.

5. God's warning of us of our danger of damnation hath a greater tendency to have influence upon us,

us, because he is our judge. Damnation is a punishment to which he condemns and which he inflicts. What he warns us of is his own wrath and vengeance. In his word we have his threatenings against sin denounced by himself. He tells us that if we go on in sin, he will destroy us, and cast us out of his sight, and pour out his wrath upon us, and hold us eternally under torment and misery. He tells us *so himself*, and this hath a much greater tendency to influence us, than to be told so by another, who is not to be our judge, who hath not in his hands the power of making us miserable.

WHEN a king immediately threatens his own displeasure, it has a greater tendency to terrify men, than when another man threatens it, or warns them of the danger of it.

6. God is infinitely wise and knows better how to speak to us so as to persuade us, than one rising from the dead. He perfectly knows our nature and state, and knows how to adapt his instructions and warnings to our frame and circumstances in the world; and without doubt that method which God hath chosen and taken in his word, is agreeable to his infinite wisdom and most adapted to our nature.

If one should come from hell to warn sinners, it may be he would tell them of hell in such a manner, as would have more of a tendency to drive men into despair, and set them a blaspheming as they do in hell, than to excite them to strive for salvation, and diligently to use the means which God hath appointed. But God knoweth what revelation of hell we can bear, and what hath the most tendency to do us good, in this our infirm, dark and sinful state.----- The declarations of one come from hell might more tend to drive us from God, than to bring us near to him.

him. It is best for us to be warned and instructed by GOD, who knows best how to do it.

THESE are some of the reasons why the warnings of GOD's word have more of a tendency to bring us to repentance, than the warning of one rising from the dead.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

1. IT is a natural inference from this doctrine, that if these means which GOD hath appointed, do not answer to lead men to repentance and reformation, no others would.---- Although this be not an absolutely necessary consequence from the words of the doctrine; yet it seems to be CHRIST's aim to teach us that if GOD's means will not answer, none will. Our own means, those which we can devise of our own heads, However they may seem more likely at a distance, to be effectual; yet if they be brought to the trial, will not prove to be better. The rich man thought that if his brethren were warned by one rising from the dead, they would surely repent. But Abraham tells him, he is mistaken.

If one rising from the dead would not answer the purpose, we may rationally conclude that no other kind of means, different from those appointed by GOD, would. For what can we think of, which seems to have more of a tendency to awaken men, and lead to repentance, than one coming from the dead to them; except those means which we enjoy.----- Indeed men can think of many means, which they may imagine, if they enjoyed them, would make them believe and repent. But they deceive themselves.

It may be they think, if they could see some prophet, and see him work miracles, that this would awaken

awaken them. But how was it in those times, in which there were prophets? There has rarely been a more degenerate time, than that in which lived Elijah and Elisha, those great prophets of Israel, who wrought so many miracles. The people did not regard their prophecies nor their miracles; but walked in their own ways, and served their own gods, so that Elijah thought, that there was none left of the true worshippers of God. And how did they treat the prophet Jeremiah, so solemnly warning them from God of their approaching destruction! And how often do the prophets complain that all their prophecies and warnings were neglected and despised!

Would it be sufficient, if you could hear God speak from heaven, with your bodily ears? How was it, when there were such things? How was it in Moses's time, when they heard God speak out of the midst of the fire, and heard the voice of words exceeding loud and full of majesty, so that they exceedingly trembled? When they saw mount Sinai all covered with smoke, and shaking exceedingly? And when some of them saw God, saw the God of Israel and did eat and drink?----How did they behave themselves? Did they all of them turn from their sins, and after that walk in the ways of God?----It is true, they were very much affected at first, while it was a new and strange thing to them; but how hard-hearted and rebellious were they soon after? They did not scruple to rebel against this same great and glorious God. Yea they made a golden calf, while Moses was in the mount conversing with God, just after they had seen those dreadful appearances of divine majesty.

Thus they did from time to time rebel against the LORD, although they had seen so many miracles and wonders.

wonders in Egypt, at the red sea, and in the wilderness; although they continually saw the pillar of cloud and of fire going before them, were continually fed in a miraculous manner with manna, and in the same miraculous manner made to drink water out of the rock.

MEN are apt to think, that if they had lived in CHRIST's time, and had seen and heard him, and had seen his miracles; that they would have effectually convinced and turned them from sin. But how was it in those times? How few were there brought to repentance, by all his discourses and miracles? How hard-hearted were they? Some were very much affected for a little while; but how few constant, steady followers had he! He was notwithstanding his miracles, rejected, despised and even murdered by the people, among whom he dwelt. And they were men of the same natures, of the same sort of hearts, as sinners in these days.

The scripture is full of instances, which are sufficient to convince us, that if the word of God will not awaken and convert sinners, nothing will.---And we see enough in these days to convince us of it. Men sometimes meet with those things, by which we should not imagine, if we did not see it, and were not used to it, but that they would be thoroughly awakened and reformed. They sometimes hear the warnings of dying men, men who are expecting to go to hell. One would think, this would be enough to awaken them; and it may be they are affected with it for the present: but it does but just touch them; it vanishes away and is gone like a puff of wind.

SOMETIMES sinners themselves are laid upon beds of sickness, and their lives hang in doubt before them. They are brought to the sides of the grave, and to the

the very mouth of hell, and their hearts are full of terror and amazement. Yet if they recover they soon forget it and return to the ways of folly and wickedness. — Sometimes this is repeated; they are taken sick again, are again in extreme peril of death, their hearts are full of amazement, and they make many promises and vows; yet being recovered they again soon forget all and return to sin and folly. Such things are enough to convince us, that if the word of God be not sufficient to convince men, and make them break off their sins, no external means would be sufficient.

PERHAPS some may yet be ready to think, that if sinners should see hell, and hear the cries of the damned, that would be effectual, though nothing else would. But if we duly consider the matter, we shall see reason to think, that that would not have so great a tendency to turn men from sin to God, as the word of God. Such a thing would doubtless be effectual to terrify and affright men, and probably to affright them to death. — Such a mean is not at all suitable to our nature and state in the world. If it should not fright men to death, it would not have so great a tendency to make them diligently use means for their salvation, as the warnings of scripture. It would probably drive them to despair; it would so take away all their spirits, that they would have no heart to seek God. Instead of driving them to God, it would probably make them hate God the more. It would make them more like devils; and set them blaspheming as the damned do. For while the hearts of men are filled with natural darkness, they cannot see the glory of the divine justice, appearing in such extreme torments.

THEREFORE

THEREFORE GOD's means, the means which he hath instituted for us, are doubtless the best, and most conducive to lead men to repentance and salvation. They are doubtless far better than any other, which we can devise.

2. HENCE we learn the dreadful hardness of men's hearts, as the word of GOD hath no more influence upon them, and as they are no more moved and wrought upon by those best means, which infinite wisdom hath provided. The warnings of the word of GOD are, as you have heard, better and more powerful means, than if one should rise from the dead to warn us, and tell us our danger, and the dreadfulness of the wrath of GOD. You have also heard that if these means will not answer the end of awakening and leading sinners to repentance, no other will, neither the working of miracles, nor the hearing of GOD speak with an audible voice from heaven, nor any thing else.-----Yet how few are there, who are effectually wrought upon by the word of GOD ! They are very thinly sown ; there is but here and there one.

WHEN we read how the children of Israel conducted themselves in the wilderness, how often they murmured and offended ; we are ready to wonder at the hardness of their hearts. And when we read the history of CHRIST, and how the Jews halted and rejected him notwithstanding his many miracles ; we are ready to wonder how they could be so hard-hearted. But we have as much reason to wonder at ourselves ; for we have naturally the same sort of hearts that they had ; and sinners in these days manifest an hardness of heart as much to be wondered at, in that they are not influenced by the word of GOD ; for they who will not hear Moses and the prophets,

JESUS

JESUS CHRIST and his apostles, neither would be persuaded, if one should rise from the dead, or if an angel should come from heaven.

THE best means of awakening and conversion are exceeding plentifully enjoyed by us, much more plentifully in several respects, than they were by those who had only Moses and the prophets. In the first place we have divine truth abundantly more fully revealed in the bible, than they had then. Light now shines abundantly clear. Gospel truth is revealed not in types and shadows, but plainly. Heaven and hell are much more clearly and expressly made known. We are told that the glory of that revelation was no glory in comparison with the glory of the revelation of the gospel.

AGAIN, we have a greater plenty of bibles, than they had under the dispensation of Moses and the prophets. Then there was no such thing as printing, and bibles were scarce things. They seldom had any bibles, any where else but in their synagogues. But now we have them in our houses; we can look into them when we please.-----Besides, CHRIST hath appointed the gospel ministry, by which we have the word of God explained and enforced every week.-----Yet how little influence hath the word of God to bring men to repentance!

LET this strike conviction into those, who never yet have found any such effect by the word of God. Though you are convinced of nothing else, yet you have abundant reason to be convinced, that your hearts are as hard as a stone, and that you are exceedingly stupid and sottish.

3. HENCE we may learn how justly and fairly God deals with us. He gives us the best means of awakening and reclaiming us from our sins; better than

than if he had sent one from the dead to warn us. He gives us those means which are most suited to our nature and circumstances. He gives sinners abundant warning before he punishes them. What could he have done more; than he hath done? We can devise or imagine no sort of warning, which would have been better, than what God hath given us.----- How justly therefore are ungodly men punished; how inexcusable will they be.

4. LET all make use of the means, which God hath instituted. They are the best and only means by which we may expect to obtain salvation. We shall be most inexcusable therefore, if we neglect them. Let us attend to the word of God, read and hear it carefully, consider it thoroughly, and daily walk by it. Let us be diligent in this work. The word of God is a great price put into our hands to get wisdom and eternal salvation; let us therefore improve it, while we have it, as we know not how soon we may be deprived of it; lest CHRIST say to us, as in Luke xix. 42. If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes.

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S E R M O N * VII.

Hypocrites deficient in the Duty of
Prayer.

J O B xxvii. 10.

Will he always call upon GOD?

C O N C E R N I N G these words I would
observe,

1. WHO it is that is here spoken of, viz. the hypocrite; as you may see, if you take the two preceding verses with the verse of the text. "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?" Job's three friends their speeches to him insisted much upon it, that he was an hypocrite. But Job in this chapter asserts his sincerity and integrity, and shows how different his own behaviour had been from that of hypocrites. Particularly he declares his stedfast and unmovable resolution of persevering and holding out the ways of religion and righteousness to the end;

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2 DATED JUNE 1749.

as you may see in the six first verses.-----In the text he shows how contrary to this stedfastness and perseverance, the character of the hypocrite is, who is not wont thus to hold out in religion.

2. WE may observe what duty of religion it is, with respect to which the hypocrite is decyphered in the text, and that is the duty of *prayer* or calling upon God.

3. HERE is something supposed of the hypocrite relating to this duty, viz. That he may continue in it *for a while*; he may call upon God for a season.

4. SOMETHING asserted, viz. that it is not the manner of hypocrites to continue *always* in this duty. *Will he always call upon GOD?* It is in the form of an interrogation; but the words have the force of a strong negation, or of an assertion that however the hypocrite may call upon God for a season, yet he will not always continue in it.

D O C T R I N E,

HOWEVER hypocrites may continue for a season in the duty of prayer; yet it is their manner after a while, in a great measure to leave it off.

IN speaking upon this doctrine, I shall show,

I. How hypocrites often continue for a season to call upon God.

II. How it is their manner, after a while, in a great measure to leave off the practice of this duty.

III. GIVE some reasons why this is the manner of hypocrites.

I. I WOULD show how hypocrites often continue for a season in the duty of prayer.

1. THEY do so for a while after they have received

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ceived common illuminations and affections. While they are under awakenings, they may through fear of hell call upon God, and attend very constantly upon the duty of secret prayer. And after they have had some melting affections, having their hearts much moved with the goodness of God, or with some affecting encouragements, and false joy and comfort, while these impressions last, they continue to call upon God in the duty of secret prayer.

2. AFTER they have obtained an hope, and have made profession of their good estate, they often continue for a while in the duty of secret prayer. For a while they are affected with their hope: they think that God hath delivered them out of a natural condition and given them an interest in CHRIST, thus introducing them into a state of safety from that eternal misery, which they lately feared. With this supposed kindness of God to them, they are much affected, and often find in themselves, for a while, a kind of love to God, excited by his supposed love to them. Now while this affection towards God continues, the duties of religion seem pleasant to them; it is even with some delight that they approach to God in their closets; and for the present, it may be, they think of no other than continuing to call upon God, as long as they live.

YEA they may continue in the duty of secret prayer for a while after the liveliness of their affections is past; partly through the influence of their former intentions: They intended to continue seeking God always; and now suddenly to leave off, would therefore be too shocking to their own minds: And partly through the force of their own preconceived notions, and what they have always believed, viz, that goodly persons do continue in religion, and that their goodness is not like the morning cloud. There-

fore, though they have no love to the duty of prayer and begin to grow weary of it ; yet as they love their own hope, they are some what backward to take a course, which will prove it to be a false hope, and so deprive them of it.

If they should at once carry themselves so as they have always been taught is a sign of a false hope, they would scare themselves. Their hope is dear to them, and it would scare them to see any plain evidence that it is not true. Hence, for a considerable time after the force of their illuminations and affections is over, and after they hate the duty of prayer, and would be glad to have done with it, if they could, without showing themselves to be hypocrites ; they hold up a kind of attendance upon the duty of secret prayer,

——— This may keep up the outside of religion in them for a good while, and occasion it to be some what slowly, that they are brought to neglect it. They must not leave off suddenly, because that would be too great a shock to their false peace. But they must come gradually to it, as they find their consciences can bear it, and as they can find out devices and salvo's to cover over the matter, and make their doing consistent, in their own opinion, with the truth of their hope.

But

II. It is the manner of hypocrites after a while in a great measure to leave off the practice of this duty. We are often taught that the seeming goodness and piety of hypocrites is not of a lasting and persevering nature. It is so with respect to their practice of the duty of prayer in particular, and especially of secret prayer. They can omit this duty, and the omission of it not be taken notice of by others, who know what profession they have made. So that regard to their own reputation doth not oblige them still to practise it. If others saw how they neglect

it would exceedingly shock their charity towards them. But their neglect doth not fall under their observation; at least not under the observation of many. Therefore they may omit this duty, and still have the credit of being converted persons.

MEN of this character can come to a neglect of secret prayer by degrees without very much shocking their peace. For though indeed for a converted person to live in a great measure without secret prayer, is very wide of the notion they once had of a true convert; yet they find means by degrees to alter their notions, and to bring their principles to suit with their inclinations; and at length they come to that, in their notions of things, that a man may be a convert, and yet live very much in neglect of this duty. In time they can bring all things to suit well together, an hope of heaven, and an indulgence of sloth in gratifying carnal appetites, and living in a great measure a prayerless life. They cannot indeed suddenly make these things agree; it must be a work of time; and length of time will effect it. By degrees they find out ways to guard and defend their consciences against those powerful enemies; so that those enemies and a quiet, secure conscience, can at length dwell pretty well together.

WHEREAS it is asserted in the doctrine, that it is the manner of hypocrites, after a while, in a great measure to leave off this duty; I would observe to you,

1. THAT it is not intended but that they may commonly continue to the end of life in yielding an external attendance on open prayer, or prayer with others. They may commonly be present at publick prayers in the congregation, and also at family-prayer. This, in such places of light as this is, men commonly do, before ever they are so much as awakened.

kened. Many vicious persons, who make no pretence to serious religion, commonly attend publick prayers in the congregation, and also more private prayers in the families in which they live, unless it be when carnal designs interfere, or when their youthful pleasures and diversions, and their vain company call them: and then they make no conscience of attending family-prayer. Otherwise they may continue to attend upon prayer as long as they live, and yet may truly be said not to call upon God. For such prayer in the manner of it, is not their own. They are present only for the sake of their credit, or in compliance with others. They may be present at these prayers and yet have no proper prayer of their own. Many of those concerning whom it may be said, as in Job. xv. 4. *That they cast off fear and restrain prayer before GOD*, are yet frequently present at family and publick prayers.

2. But they in a great measure leave off the practice of *secret* prayer. They come to this pass, by degrees. At first they begin to be careless about it, under some particular temptations. Because they have been out in young company, or have been taken up very much with worldly business, they omit it once: after that they more easily omit it again. Thus it presently becomes a frequent thing with them to omit it; and after a while it comes to that pass, that they seldom attend it. Perhaps they attend it on sabbath days, and sometimes on other days. But they have ceased to make it a constant practice, daily to retire to worship God alone, and to seek his face in secret places. They sometimes do a little to quiet conscience, and just to keep alive their old hope; because it would be shocking to them, even after all their subtil dealing with their consciences, to call themselves

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themselves converts, and yet totally to live without prayer. Yet the practice of secret prayer they have in a great measure left off.-----I come now

III. To the reasons, why this is the manner of hypocrites.

I. HYPOCRITES never had the spirit of prayer given them. They may have been stirred up to the external performance of this duty, and that with a great deal of earnestness and affection, and yet always have been destitute of the true spirit of prayer. The spirit of prayer is an holy spirit, a gracious spirit. We read of the spirit of grace and supplication; Zech. xii. 10. I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the *spirit of grace and supplications*.-----Wherever there is a true spirit of supplication, there is the spirit of grace. The true spirit of prayer is no other than God's own spirit dwelling in the hearts of the saints. And as this spirit comes from God, so doth it naturally tend to God in holy breathings and pantings. It naturally leads to God, to converse with him by prayer. Therefore the spirit is said to make intercession for the saints, with groanings which cannot be uttered. Rom. viii. 26. THE spirit of God makes intercession for them, as is that spirit which in some respect indites their prayers, and leads them so and so to pour out their souls before God. Therefore the saints are said to worship God in the *spirit*; Phil. iii. 3. We are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit. And Gal. iv. 23. The true worshippers worship the father in spirit and in truth. The truly godly have the spirit of adoption, the spirit of a child, to which it is natural to go to God and call upon him, crying him as to a father.

But hypocrites have nothing of this spirit of adoption:

tion : They have not the spirit of children ; for this is a gracious and holy spirit, only given in a real work of regeneration. Therefore it is often mentioned as a part of the distinguishing character of the godly, that they call upon God. Psal. cxlv. 18, 19. The Lord is nigh to them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him ; he will also hear their cry, and will save them. Joel ii. 32. It shall come to pass that whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.

It is natural to one who is truly born from above to pray to God, and to pour out his soul in holy supplications before his heavenly father. This is as natural to the new nature and life as breathing is to the nature and life of the body. But hypocrites have not this new nature. Those illuminations and affections which they had, went away and left no change of nature. Therefore prayer naturally dies away in them, having no foundation for the keeping of it up, laid in the nature of the soul. It is maintained, while it is maintained, only by a certain force put upon nature. But force is not constant ; and as that declines, nature will take place again.

The spirit of a true convert is a spirit of true love to God, and that naturally inclines the soul to those duties wherein it is conversant with God, and makes it to delight in approaching to God. But an hypocrite hath no such spirit. He is left under the reigning power of enmity against God, which naturally inclines him to shun the presence of God.

The spirit of a true convert is a spirit of faith and reliance on the power, wisdom and mercy of God, and such a spirit is naturally expressed in prayer. True prayer is nothing else but faith expressed. Hence

we read of *the prayer of faith*; James v. 15. True Christian prayer is the faith and reliance of the soul breathed forth in words. But an hypocrite is without the spirit of faith. He hath no true reliance or dependence on God, but is really self-dependent.

As to those common convictions and affections, which the hypocrite had, and which made him keep up the duty of prayer for a while; they not reaching the bottom of the heart, nor being accompanied with any change of nature, a little thing extinguishes them. The cares of the world commonly choke and suffocate them, and often the pleasures and vanities of youth totally put an end to them, and with them ends their constant practice of the duty of prayer.

2. WHEN an hypocrite hath had his false conversion, his wants are in his sense of things already supplied, his desires are already answered; and so he finds no further business at the throne of grace. He never was sensible that he had any other needs, but a need of being safe from hell. And now that he is converted, as he thinks, that need is supplied. Why then should he still go on to resort to the throne of grace with earnest requests? He is out of danger; all that he was afraid of is removed: he hath got enough to carry him to heaven, and what more should he desire?-----While he was under awakenings he had this to stir him up to go to God in prayer, that he was in continual fear of hell. This put him upon crying to God for mercy. But since in his own opinion he is converted, he hath no further business about which to go to God. And although he may keep up the duty of prayer in the outward form a little while, for fear of spoiling his hope; yet he will find a dull business of continuing it without any need or necessity, and so by degrees he will let drop the practice,

practice. The work of the hypocrite is done, when he is converted ; and therefore he standeth in no further need of help.

BUT it is far otherwise with the true convert. His work is not done ; but he finds still a great work to do, and great wants to be supplied. He sees himself still to be a poor, empty helpless creature, and that he still stands in great and continual need of God's help. He is sensible that without God he can do nothing. A false conversion makes a man in his own eyes self-sufficient. He saith he is rich and increased with goods and hath need of nothing ; and knoweth not that he is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. But after a true conversion, the soul remains sensible of it's own impotence and emptiness, as it is in itself, and it's sense of it is rather increased than diminished. It is still sensible of it's universal dependence on God for every thing. A true convert is sensible that his grace is very imperfect ; and he is very far from having all that he desires. Instead of that, by conversion are begotten in him new desires, which he never had before. He now finds in him holy appetites, an hungering and thirsting after righteousness, a longing after more acquaintance and communion with God, So that he hath business enough still at the throne of grace ; yea his business there, instead of being diminished, is since his conversion rather increased.

3. THE hope which the hypocrite hath of his good estate, takes off the force that the command of God before had upon his conscience ; so that now he dares neglect so plain a duty. The command which requires the practice of the duty of prayer is exceeding plain ; Mat. xxvi. 41. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. Eph. vi. 18. Praying

ing always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with *all perseverance*, and supplication for all saints. Mat. vi. 6. When thou prayest enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy father which is in secret. As long as the hypocrite was in his own apprehension in continual danger of hell, he durst not disobey these commands. But since he is, as he thinks, safe from hell, he is grown bold, he dares to live in the neglect of the plainest command in the bible.

4. It is the manner of hypocrites after a while to return to sinful practices, which will tend to keep them from praying. While they were under convictions, they reformed their lives, and walked very exactly. This reformation continues for a little time perhaps, after their supposed conversion; while they are much affected with hope and false comfort. But as these things die away, their old lusts revive, and they by degrees return like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. They return to their sensual practices, to their worldly practices, to their proud and contentious practices, as before. And no wonder this makes them forsake their closets. Sinning and praying agree not well together. If a man be constant in the duty of secret prayer, it will tend to restrain him from wilful sinning. So on the other hand, if he allow himself in sinful practices, it will restrain him from praying. It will give quite another turn to his mind, so that he will have no disposition to the practice of such a duty: it will be contrary to him. A man who knows, that he lives in sin against God, will not be inclined to come daily into the presence of God; but will rather be inclined to fly from his presence, as Adam, when he had eaten of the forbidden

den fruit; ran away from God, and hid himself among the trees of the garden.

To keep up the duty of prayer, after he hath given loose to his lusts, would tend very much to disquiet a man's conscience. It would give advantage to his conscience to testify aloud against him. If he should come from his wickedness into the presence of God, immediately to speak to him, his conscience would, as it were, fly in his face. Therefore hypocrites, as they by degrees admit their wicked practices, exclude prayer.

5. HYPOCRITES never counted the cost of perseverance in seeking God and of following him to the end of life. To continue instant in prayer with all perseverance to the end of life, requires much care, watchfulness and labour. For much opposition is made to it, by the flesh, the world and the devil; and *christians* meet with many temptations to forsake this practice. He that would persevere in this duty, must be laborious in religion in general. But hypocrites never count the cost of such labour; i. e. they never were prepared in the disposition of their minds to give their lives to the service of God, and to the duties of religion. It is therefore no great wonder they are weary and give out, after they have continued for a while, as their affections are gone, and they find that prayer to them grows irksome and tedious.

6. HYPOCRITES have no interest in those gracious promises, which God hath made to his people, of those spiritual supplies, which are needful in order to uphold them in the way of their duty to the end. God hath promised to true saints, that they shall not forsake him. Jer. xxxii. 40. I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. He hath promised that he will keep them

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in the way of their duty ; 1 Theſſ. v. 23, 24. And the God of peace ſanctify you wholly. And I pray God your ſpirit, ſoul and body be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Faithful is he that calleth you, who alſo will do it.

——But hypocrites have no intereſt in theſe and ſuch like promiſes ; and therefore are liable to fall away. If God do not uphold men, there is no dependence on their ſtedfaſtneſs. If the ſpirit of God depart from them, they will ſoon become careleſs and profane, and there will be an end to their ſeeming devotion and piety.

THE APPLICATION

MAY be in an uſe of *exhortation* in two branches.

I. I WOULD exhort thoſe who have entertained an hope of their being true converts, and yet ſince their ſuppoſed converſion have left off the duty of ſecret prayer, and do ordinarily allow themſelves in the omiſſion of it, to throw away their hope. If you have left off calling upon God, it is time for you to leave off hoping, and flattering yourſelves with an imagination that you are the children of God. Probably it will be a very difficult thing for you to do this. It is hard for a man to let go an hope of heaven, on which he hath once allowed himſelf to lay hold, and which he hath retained for a conſiderable time. True converſion is a rare thing ; but that men are brought off from a falſe hope of converſion, after they are once ſettled and eſtabliſhed in it, and have continued in it for ſome time ; is much more rare.

THOSE things in men, which, if they were known to others, would be ſufficient to convince others that they are hypocrites, will not convince themſelves ; and thoſe things which would be ſufficient to convince

vince them concerning others, and to cause them to cast others entirely out of their charity, will not be sufficient to convince them concerning themselves. They can make larger allowances for themselves than they can for others. They can find out ways to solve objections against their own hope, when they can find none in the like case for their neighbour.

BUT if your case be such as is spoken of in the doctrine, it is surely time for you to seek a better hope and another work of God's spirit, than ever you have yet experienced; something more thorough and effectual. When you see and find by experience that the seed which was sown in your hearts, though at first it sprang up and seemed flourishing, yet is withering away, as by the heat of the sun, or is choaked, as with thorns; this shows in what sort of ground the seed was sown, that it is either stony or thorny ground; and that therefore it is necessary you should pass through another change, whereby your heart may become good ground, which shall bring forth fruit with patience.

INSIST not on that as a reason why you should not throw away your hope, that you had the judgment of others that the change of which you were the subject was right. It is a small matter to be judged of man's judgment, whether you be approved or condemned, and whether it be by minister or people, wise or unwise. 1. Cor. iv. 3. "It is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment." If your goodness have proved to be as the morning cloud and early dew; if you be one of those, who have forsaken God and left off calling upon his name; you have the judgment of God, and the sentence of God in the scriptures against you, which is a thousand times more than to have the judgment

judgment of all the wise and godly men and ministers in the world in your favour.

OTHERS, from your account of things, may have been obliged to have charity for you, and to think that, provided you were not mistaken, and in your account did not misrepresent things, or express them by wrong terms, you were really converted. But what a miserable foundation is this, upon which to build an hope as to your eternal state!

HERE I request your attention to a few things in particular, which I have to say to you concerning your hope.

I. WHY will you retain that hope, which by evident experience you find poisons you? Is it reasonable to think, that an holy hope, an hope that is from heaven, would have such an influence? No surely, nothing of such a malignant influence comes from that world of purity and glory. No poison groweth in the paradise of God. The same hope, which leads men to sin in this world, will lead to hell hereafter. Why therefore will you retain such an hope, of which your own experience shows you the ill tendency, in that it encourages you to lead a wicked life? For certainly that life is a wicked life, wherein you live in the neglect of so well known a duty, as that of secret prayer, and in the disobedience of so plain a command of God, as that by which this duty is enjoined. And is not a way of disobedience to God, a way to hell?

If your own experience of the nature and tendency of your hope, will not convince you of the falseness of it, what will? Are you resolved to retain your hope, let it prove ever so unsound and hurtful? Will you hold it fast, till you go to hell with it? Many men cling to a false hope and embrace it so closely that

that they never let it go, till the flames of hell cause their arms to unclinch and let go their hold.---Consider how you will answer it at the day of judgment, when God shall call you to an account for your folly in resting in such an hope. Will it be a sufficient answer for you to say, that you had the charity of others, and that they thought your conversion was right?

CERTAINLY it is foolish for men to imagine, that God had no more wisdom, or could contrive no other way of bestowing comfort and hope of eternal life, than one which should encourage men to forsake him.

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S E R M O N VIII.

Hypocrites deficient in the Duty of
Prayer.

J O B xxvii. 10.

Will he always call upon GOD?

D O C T R I N E.

HOWEVER hypocrites may continue for a season in the duty of prayer, yet it is their manner after a while, in a great measure to leave it off.

THIS doctrine was our subject in the preceeding discourse, in which, after having shown---how hypocrites often continue for a season to call upon GOD---how it is their manner after a while, in a great measure, to leave it off---and having given the reasons why this is their manner; I came at length to make *application*, which I proposed to do in an use of *exhortation* in two branches; and first to exhort those who entertain an hope of their good estate and yet live in the neglect of secret prayer, to reject their hope. One particular consideration I have already said before men of this character, to the end just mentioned; and I now proceed to say to them,

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2. How is your doing, as you do, consistent with loving God above all. If you have not a spirit to love God above your dearest earthly friends, and your most pleasant earthly enjoyments; the scriptures are very plain and full in it, that you are not true christians. But if you had indeed such a spirit, would you thus grow weary of the practice of drawing near to him; and become habitually so averse to it, as in a great measure to cast off so plain a duty, which is so much the life of a child of God? It is the nature of love to be averse to absence, and to love a near access to those whom we love. We love to be with them; we delight to come often to them, and to have much conversation with them. But when a person, who hath heretofore been wont to converse freely with another, by degrees forsakes him, grows strange, and converses with him but little; and that although the other be importunate with him for the continuance of their former intimacy; this plainly shows the coldness of his heart towards him.

THE neglect of the duty of prayer seems to be inconsistent with supreme love to God also upon another account; and that is that it is against the will of God so plainly revealed. True love to God seeks to please God in every thing; and universally to conform to his will.

3. Your thus restraining prayer before God is not only inconsistent with the love, but also with the fear of God. It is an argument that you cast off fear, as is manifest by that text, Job. xv. 4. *Yea thou castest off fear and restrainest prayer before God.* While you thus live in the transgression of so plain a command of God, you evidently show, that there is no fear of God before your eyes. Psal. xxxvi. *The transgression of the wicked faith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.*

4. CONSIDER how living in such a neglect is consistent with leading an holy life. We are abundantly instructed in scripture, that true christians do lead an holy life; that without holiness no man shall see the LORD, Heb. xii. 14. And that every one that hath this hope in him, purifyeth himself, even as CHRIST is pure 1 Joh. iii. 3.----In Prov. xvi. 17. It is said, The *high way* of the upright is to depart from evil; i. e. it is, as it were, the common beaten road, in which all the godly travel.----To the like purpose is Mai. xxxv. 8. A *high way* shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the *way of holiness*; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for *those*; i. e. those redeemed persons spoken of in the foregoing verses.----It is spoken of in Rom. viii. 1, as the character of all believers, that they walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

BUT how is a life in a great measure prayerless, consistent with an holy life? To lead an holy life is to lead a life devoted to God; a life of worshipping and serving God; a life consecrated to the service of God. But how doth he lead such a life, who doth not so much as maintain the duty of prayer? How can such a man be said to walk by the spirit, and to be a servant of the most high God.----An holy life is a life of faith. The life that true Christians live in the world, they live by the faith of the son of God. But who can believe that that man lives by faith, who lives without prayer which is the natural expression of faith? Prayer is as natural an expression of faith, as breathing is of life; and to say a man lives a life of faith, and yet lives a prayerless life, is every whit as inconsistent and incredible, as to say that a man lives without breathing. A prayerless life is so far from being an holy life that it is a profane life: he

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that lives so, lives like an heathen, who calleth not on God's name: he that lives a prayerless life, lives without God in the world.

5. If you live in the neglect of secret prayer, you show your goodwill to neglect all the worship of God. He that prays only when he prays with others, would not pray at all, were it not, that the eyes of others are upon him. He that will not pray where none but God seeth him, manifestly doth not pray at all out of respect to God, or regard to his all seeing eye, and therefore doth in effect cast off all prayer. And he that casts off prayer, in effect casts off all the worship of God, of which prayer is the principal duty. Now what a miserable saint is he, who is no worshipper of God! He that casts off the worship of God, in effect casts off God himself: he refuses to own him, or to be conversant with him as his God. For the way in which men own God and are conversant with him as their God, is by worshipping him.

6. How can you expect to dwell with God forever if you so neglect and forsake him here? This your practice shows, that you place not your happiness in God, in nearness to him, and communion with him. He who refuses to come and visit, and converse with a friend, and who in a great measure forsakes him, when he is abundantly invited and importuned to come; plainly shows that he places not his happiness in the company and conversation of that friend. Now if this be the case with you respecting God, then how can you expect to have it for your happiness to all eternity, to be with God, and to enjoy holy communion with him?

LET those persons who hope they are converted, and yet have in a great measure left off the duty of secret prayer, and whose manner it is ordinarily to neglect it, for their own sake seriously consider these things,

things. For what will profit them to please themselves with *that*, while they live, which will fail them at last, and leave them in fearful and amazing disappointment?

It is probable that some of you, who have entertained a good opinion of your state, and have looked upon yourselves as converts; but have of late in a great measure left off the duty of secret prayer; will this evening attend secret prayer; and so may continue to do, for a little while after your hearing this sermon, to the end, that you may solve the difficulty and the objection which is made against the truth of your hope. But this will not hold. As it hath been in former instances of the like nature, so what you now hear, will have such effect upon you, but a little while. When the business and cares of the world shall again begin to crowd a little upon you, or the next time you shall go out into young company, it is probable you will again neglect this duty. The next time a frolick shall be appointed, to which it is proposed to you to go, it is highly probable you will neglect not only secret prayer, but also family-prayer. Or at least, after a while you will come to the same pass again, as before, in casting off fear and restraining prayer before God.

It is not very likely that you will ever *be constant and persevering in this duty*, until you shall have obtained a better principle in your hearts, until you shall have passed an otherguise change than ever you have yet passed. The streams which have no springs to feed them, will dry up. The drought and heat consume the snow-waters. Although they run plentifully in the spring, yet when the sun ascends higher with a burning heat, the y are gone. The seed that is sown in stony places, though it seem to flourish at present,

present, yet as the sun shall rise with a burning heat, will wither away. None will bring forth fruit with patience, but those whose hearts are become good ground.

WITHOUT any heavenly seed remaining in them, men may, whenever they fall in among the godly, continue all their lives to talk like saints. They may for their credit sake tell of what they have experienced: but their *deeds* will not hold. They may continue to tell of their inward experiences, and yet live in the neglect of secret prayer and of other duties.

II. I would take occasion from this doctrine to exhort all to persevere in the duty of prayer. This exhortation is much insisted on in the word of God. It is insisted on in the old testament, 1 Chron. xvi. 11. "Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face *continually*." Isai. lxii. 7. "Ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence"; i. e. be not silent as to the voice of prayer, as is manifest by the following words, "and give him no rest, till he establish and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." Israel of old is reproved for growing weary of the duty of prayer. Isai. xliii. 22. "But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob, thou hast been weary of me, O Israel."

PERSEVERANCE in the duty of prayer is very much insisted on in the new testament; as Luke xviii. at the beginning, "a man ought always to pray and not to faint"; i. e. not to be discouraged or weary of the duty; but should always continue in it. Again Luke xxi. 36. Watch ye therefore and pray *always*. We have the example of Anna the prophetess set before us Luke i. 36. &c. Who though she had lived to be more than an hundred years old,

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yet never was weary of this duty. It is said, "She departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." Cornelius also is commended for his constancy in this duty. It is said that he prayed to God always; Acts x. 2. The apostle Paul in his epistles insists very much on constancy in this duty, Rom. xii. 12. "Continuing instant in prayer."---Eph. vi. 18, 19. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance." Col. iv. 2. "Continue in prayer and watch in the same." 1 Thess. v. 17. "Pray without ceasing." To the same effect the apostle Peter; 1 Pet. iv. 7. "Watch unto prayer."---Thus abundantly the scriptures insist upon it, that we should persevere in the duty of prayer; which shows that it is of very great importance, that we should persevere. If the contrary be the manner of hypocrites, as hath been shown in the doctrine, then surely we ought to beware of this leaven.

BUT here let the following things be particularly considered as motives to perseverance in this duty.

1. THAT perseverance in the way of duty is necessary to salvation, and is abundantly declared so to be in the holy scriptures; as Isai. lxiv. 5. "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth, for we have sinned: in those is continuance and we shall be saved." Heb. x. 38 and 39. "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul hath no pleasure in him." But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Rom. xi. 22. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which

“ which fell, severity ; but towards thee, goodness,
 “ if thou *continue* in his goodness ; *otherwise* thou al-
 “ so shalt be cut off.” So in many other places.

MANY, when they think they are converted, seem to imagine that their work is done, and that there is nothing else needful in order to their going to heaven.——Indeed perseverance in holiness of life is not necessary to salvation, as the righteousness by which a right to salvation is obtained. Nor is actual perseverance necessary in order to our becoming interested in that righteousness by which we are justified. For as soon as ever a soul hath believed in CHRIST, or hath put forth one act of faith in him, it becomes interested in his righteousness, and in all the promises purchased by it.

BUT persevering in the way of duty is necessary to salvation, as a concomitant and evidence of a title to salvation. There is never a title to salvation without it, though it be not the righteousness by which a title to salvation is obtained. It is necessary to salvation, as it is the necessary consequence of true faith. It is an evidence which universally attends uprightness, and the defect of it, is an infallible evidence of the want of uprightness. Psal. cxxv. 4. 5. There such as are good and upright in heart, are distinguished from such as fall away, or turn aside: “ Do
 “ good, O LORD, to those that are good, and to them
 “ that are upright in their hearts. As for such as
 “ *turn aside to their crooked ways*, the LORD shall lead
 “ them forth with the workers of iniquity. But
 “ peace shall be upon Israel.”——It is mentioned as an evidence that the hearts of the children of Israel were not right with God, that they did not persevere in the ways of holiness. Psal. lxxviii. 8. “ A ge-
 “ neration that set not their hearts aright, and whose
 “ spirit was not *steadfast* with God.”

CHRIST

CHRIST gives this as a distinguishing character of those that are his *disciples indeed*, and of a true and saving faith, that it is accompanied with perseverance in the obedience of CHRIST's word. Joh. viii. 31: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, if ye *continue* in my word, then are ye my *disciples indeed*." This is mentioned as a necessary evidence of an interest in CHRIST, Heb. iii. 14: "We are made partakers of CHRIST, if we hold the *beginning of our confidence stedfast to the end*."

PERSEVERANCE is not only a necessary concomitant and evidence of a title to salvation; but also a necessary prerequisite to the actual possession of eternal life. It is the only way to heaven, the narrow way that leadeth to life. Hence CHRIST exhorts the church of Philadelphia to persevere in holiness from this consideration, that it was necessary in order to her obtaining the crown. Rev. iii. 11. Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. It is necessary not only that persons should once have been walking in the way of duty; but that they should be found so doing, when CHRIST cometh. Luke xii. 43. Blessed is that servant, whom his LORD, when he cometh, shall find so doing.----Holding out to the end is often made the condition of actual salvation. Mat. x. 22. "He that endureth to the end the *same shall be saved*"; and Rev. ii. 10. "Be *thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a crown of life*."

2. In order to your own perseverance in the way of duty, your own care and watchfulness is necessary. For though it be promised that true saints shall persevere, yet that is no argument that their care and watchfulness is not necessary in order to it; because their care to keep the commands of God, is the thing promised. If the saints should fail of care, watchfulness

fulpels and diligence to persevere in holiness, that failure of their care and diligence would itself be a failure of holiness. They who persevere not in watchfulness and diligence, persevere not in holiness of life, for holiness of life very much consists in watchfulness and diligence to keep the commands of God. It is one promise of the covenant of grace, that the saints shall keep God's commandments, Ezek. xi. 19, 20.---- Yet that is no argument that they have no need to take care to keep these commandments, or to do their duty. So the promise of God that the saints shall persevere in holiness is no argument that it is not necessary, that they should take heed lest they fall away.

THEREFORE the scriptures abundantly warn men to watch over themselves diligently, and to give earnest heed lest they fall away. 1 Cor. xv. 13. Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. 1 Cor. x. 12. Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. Heb. iii. 12, 13, 14. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of CHRIST, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end. Heb. iv. 1. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 2. Pet. iii. 17. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also be led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. 2. Joh. v. 8. Look ye to yourselves that we lose not those things, which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

THUS you see how earnestly the scriptures press on christians exhortations to take diligent heed to themselves that they fall not away. And certainly these cautions are not without reason.

THE scriptures particularly insist upon watchfulness in order to perseverance in the duty of prayer. *Watch and pray*, saith CHRIST; which implies that we should watch *unto* prayer, as the apostle Peter says 1. Pet. iv. 7. It implies that we should watch against a neglect of prayer, as well as against other sins. The apostle in places which have been already mentioned, directs us to pray with all prayer, *watching* thereunto with all perseverance, and to *continue* in prayer and *watch* in the same.---- Nor is it any wonder that the apostles so much insisted on watching in order to a continuance in prayer with all perseverance; for there are many temptations to neglect this duty; first to be inconstant in it, and from time to time to omit it; then in a great measure to neglect it. The devil watches by temptation to draw us away from God, and to hinder us from going to him in prayer. We are surrounded with one and another tempting object, business, and diversion: particularly we meet with many things, which are great temptations to a neglect of this duty.

3. To move you to persevere in the duty of prayer, consider how much you always stand in need of the help of God. If persons, who have formerly attended this duty, leave it off, the language of it is, that now they stand in no further need of God's help, that they have no further occasion to go to God with requests and supplications: when indeed it is in God we live, and move and have our being. We cannot draw a breath without his help. You need his help every day for the supply of your outward wants; and
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especially you stand in continual need of him to help your souls. Without his protection they would immediately fall into the hands of the devil, who always stands as a roaring lion, ready, whenever he is permitted, to fall upon the souls of men and devour them.

—— If God should indeed preserve your lives, but should otherwise forsake and leave you to yourselves, you would be most miserable : your lives would be a curse to you.

Those that are converted, if God should forsake them, would soon fall away totally from a state of grace, into a state far more miserable than ever they were in before their conversion. They have no strength of their own to resist those powerful enemies who surround them. Sin and satan would immediately carry them away, as a mighty flood, if God should forsake them.—— You stand in need of daily supplies from God. Without God you can receive no spiritual light nor comfort, can exercise no grace, can bring forth no fruit. Without God your souls will wither and pine away, and sink into a most wretched state. You continually need the instructions and directions of God. What can a little child do in a vast, howling wilderness, without some one to guide it, and to lead it in the right way ? Without God you will soon fall into snares, and pits, and many fatal calamities.

Seeing therefore you stand in such continual need of the help of God, how reasonable is it that you should continually seek it of him, and perseveringly acknowledge your dependence upon him, by resorting to him to spread your needs before him, and to offer up your requests to him in prayer.—— Let us consider how miserable we should be, if we should leave off prayer, and God at the same time should leave off

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to take any care of us, or to afford us any more supplies of his grace. By our constancy in prayer we cannot be profitable to God; and if we leave it off God will sustain no damage: he doth not need our prayers. Job. xxxv. 6. 7.-----But if God cease to care for us and to help us, we immediately sink: we can do nothing: we can receive nothing without him.

4. CONSIDER the great benefit of a constant, diligent and persevering attendance on this duty. It is one of the greatest and most excellent means of nourishing the new nature, and of causing the soul to flourish and prosper. It is an excellent mean of keeping up an acquaintance with God, and of growing in the knowledge of God. It is the way to a life of communion with God. It is an excellent mean of taking off the heart from the vanities of the world, and of causing the mind to be conversant in heaven. It is an excellent preservative from sin and the wiles of the devil, and a powerful antidote against the poison of the old serpent. It is a duty whereby strength is derived from God against the lusts and corruptions of the heart, and the snares of the world.

It hath a great tendency to keep the soul in a wakeful frame, and to lead us to a strict walk with God, and to a life that shall be fruitful in such good works, as tend to adorn the doctrine of CHRIST, and to cause our light so to shine before others, that they seeing our good works shall glorify our father who is in heaven. And if the duty be constantly and diligently attended, it will be a very pleasant duty. Slack and slothful attendance upon it, and unsteadiness in it, are the causes which make it so great a burden as it is to some persons. Their slothfulness in it hath naturally the effect to beget a dislike of the duty and a
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great indisposition to it. But if it be constantly and diligently attended, it is one of the best means of leading not only a christian and amiable, but also a pleasant life; a life of much sweet fellowship with CHRIST, and of the abundant enjoyment of the light of his countenance.

BESIDES, the great power which prayer, when duly attended, hath with God, is worthy of your notice. By it men become like Jacob, who as a prince had power with God and prevailed, when he wrestled with God for the blessing. See the power of prayer represented in Jam. v. 16, 17, 18.-----By these things you may be sensible how much you will lose, if you shall be negligent of this great duty of calling upon God; and how ill you will consult your own interest by such a neglect.

I CONCLUDE my discourse with two directions in order to constancy and perseverance in this duty.

I. WATCH against the beginnings of a neglect of this duty. Persons who have for a time practised this duty, and afterwards neglect it, commonly leave it off by degrees. While their convictions and religious affections last, they are very constant in their closets, and no worldly business, or company, or diversion hinders them. But as their convictions and affections begin to die away, they begin to find excuses to neglect it sometimes. They are now so hurried; they have now such and such things to attend to; or there are now such inconveniencies in the way, that they persuade themselves, they may very excusably omit it for this time. Afterwards it pretty frequently so happens, that they have something to hinder, something which they call a just excuse. After a while a less thing becomes a sufficient excuse, than was allowed to be such at first. Thus

the person by degrees contracts more and more of an habit of neglecting prayer, and becomes more and more indisposed to it. And even when he doth perform it, it is in such a poor, dull, heartless, miserable manner, that he says to himself, he might as well not do it at all, as do it so. Thus he makes his own dulness and indisposition an excuse for wholly neglecting it, or at least for living in a great measure in the neglect of it. — After this manner do satan and men's own corruptions inveigle them to their ruin.

THEREFORE beware of the first beginnings of a neglect: Watch against temptations to it: Take heed how you begin to allow of excuses. Be watchful to keep up the duty in the height of it; let it not so much as begin to sink. For when you give way, though it be but little, it is like giving way to an enemy in the field of battle; the first beginning of a retreat greatly encourages the enemy, and weakens the retreating soldiers.

2. LET me direct you to forsake all such practices, as you find by experience do indispose you to the duty of secret prayer. Examine the things in which you have allowed yourselves, and inquire whether they have had this effect. You are able to look over your past behaviour, and may doubtless, on an impartial consideration, make a judgment of the practices and courses in which you have allowed yourselves.

PARTICULARLY let young people examine their manner of *company-keeping* and the round of diversions, in which with their companions they have allowed themselves. I only desire that you would ask at the mouth of your own consciences, what has been the effect of these things with respect to your attendance on the duty of secret prayer. Have you not found

found that such practices have tended to the neglect of this duty ? Have you not found that after them you have been more indisposed to it and less conscientious and careful to attend it ? Yea have they not from time to time, actually been the means of your neglecting it ?

If you cannot deny that this is really the case, then if you seek the good of your souls, forsake these practices. Whatever you may plead for them, as that there is no hurt in them, or that there is a time for all things, and the like ; yet if you find this hurt in the consequence of them, it is time for you to forsake them. And if you value heaven more than a little worldly diversion ; if you set an higher price on eternal glory, than on a dance or a song, you will forsake them.

If these things be lawful in themselves, yet if your experience show, that they are attended with such a consequence as I have now mentioned, that is enough. It is lawful in itself for you to enjoy your right hand and your right eye. But if by experience you find they cause you to offend ; it is time for you to cut off the one, and pluck out the other, as you would rather go to heaven without them, than go to hell with them, into that place of torment, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

S E R M O N * IX.

The future Punishment of the Wicked
unavoidable and intolerable.

E Z E K I E L, xxii. 14.

Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee? I the Lord have spoken it and will do it.

IN the former part of this chapter we have a dreadful catalogue of the sins of Jerusalem; as you may see from the first to the thirteenth verse. In the thirteenth which is the verse preceeding the text, God manifests his great displeasure, and fearful wrath against them for those their iniquities. "Behold I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee." The expression of God's smiting his hand, signifies the greatness of his anger, and his preparing himself, as it were to execute wrath answerable to their heinous crimes. It is an allusion to what we sometimes see in men when they are surprized by seeing or hearing of some horrid offence, or most intolerable

• DATED April 1741.

Intolerable injury, which very much stirs their spirits, and animates them with high resentment; on such an occasion they will rise up in wrath and smite their hands together, as an expression of the heat of their indignation, and full resolution to be avenged on those who have committed the injury. As in chap. xxi. 17. "I will also smite mine hands together, and I will cause my fury to rest: I the LORD have said it."

THEN in the text the punishment of that people is represented.

1. THE nature of their punishment is more generally represented in that therein God will undertake to deal with them: God here threatens to deal with the sinners in Jerusalem. The prophets could do nothing with them. God had sent them one after another; but those sinners were too strong for them, and beat one and killed another. Therefore now God himself undertakes to deal with them.

2.— THEIR punishment is more particularly represented in three things, viz. the intolerableness, the remedilessness, and the unavoidableness of it.

(1). THE intolerableness of it: *can thine heart endure?*

(2). THE remedilessness, or the impossibility of their doing any thing for their own relief: *can thine hands be strong?*

(3). THE unavoidableness of it: *I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it.*

D O C T R I N E.

SINCE God hath undertaken to deal with impenitent sinners, they shall neither shun the threatened misery, nor deliver themselves out of it, nor can they bear it.

IN handling this doctrine, I shall 1. Show what is implied in God's undertaking to deal with impenitent sinners. 2. That therefore they cannot avoid punishment. 3. That they cannot in any measure deliver themselves from it, or do any thing for their own relief under it. 4. That they cannot bear it. 5. I shall answer an inquiry; and then proceed to the use.

I. I SHALL show what is implied in God's undertaking to deal with impenitent sinners.----Others are not able to deal with them. They baffle all the means used with them by those that are appointed to teach and to rule over them. They will not yield to parents; or to the counsels, warnings or reproofs of ministers: they prove obstinate and stiff-hearted. Therefore God undertakes to deal with them.----- This implies the following things.

1. THAT GOD will reckon with them; and take of them satisfaction to his justice. In this world God puts forth his authority to command them, and to require subjection to him. In his commands he is very positive, strictly requiring of them the performance of such and such duties, and as positively forbidding such and such things which are contrary to their duty. But they have no regard to these commands. God continues commanding and they continue rebelling. They make nothing of God's authority: God threatens, but they despise his threatenings.----- They make nothing of dishonouring God: they care not how much their behaviour is to the dishonour of God. He offers them mercy, if they will repent and return: but they despise his mercy as well as his wrath. God calleth, but they refuse. ---Thus they are continually plunging themselves deeper and deeper in debt, and at the same time

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imagine they shall escape the payment of the debt, and design entirely to rob God of his due.

BUT GOD hath undertaken to right himself. He will reckon with them; he hath undertaken to see that the debts due to him are paid. All their sins are written in his book; not one of them is forgotten, and every one must be paid. If God be wise enough and strong enough, he will have full satisfaction; he will exact the very uttermost farthing. He undertakes it as his part, as what belongs to him, to see himself righted, wherein he hath been wronged. Deut. xxxii. 35. "To me belongeth vengeance." ibid. vii. 10. "He will not be slack to him that hateth him; he will repay him to his face."

2. HE hath undertaken to vindicate the honour of his majesty. His majesty they despise. They hear that he is a great God; but they despise his greatness; they look upon him worthy of contempt, and treat him accordingly. They hear of him by the name of a great king; but his authority they regard not and sometimes trample upon it, for years together.

BUT GOD hath not left the honour of his majesty wholly to their care. Though they now trample it in the dust, yet that is no sign that it will finally be lost. If God had left it wholly in their hands, it would indeed be lost. But God doth not leave his honour and his glory with his enemies; it is too precious in his eyes to be so neglected. He hath reserved the care of it to himself: he will see to it that his own injured majesty is vindicated. If the honour of God, upon which sinners trample, finally lie in the dust, then it will be because he is not strong enough to vindicate himself. He hath sworn that great oath in Num. xiv. 21. "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD."

SINNERS

SINNERS despise his son and trample him under their feet. But he will see, if he cannot make the glory of his son appear, with respect to them; that all the earth may know how evil a thing it is to despise the Son of God.——God intends that all men and angels, all heaven and all earth shall see whether he be sufficient to magnify himself upon sinners, who now despise him. He intends that the issue of things, with respect to them, shall be open, that all men may see it.

3. HE hath undertaken to subdue impenitent sinners. Their hearts while in this world are very unsubdued. They lift up their heads and conduct very proudly and contemptuously, and often sin with an high hand. They set their mouths against the heavens, and their tongues walk through the earth. They practically say as Pharaoh did, "Who is the LORD? I know not the LORD, neither will I obey his voice." Job, xxi. 41. "They say to God, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways."

SOME, who cover their sin with specious show; who put on a face of religion, and a demure countenance and behaviour; yet have this spirit secretly signing in their breasts. Notwithstanding all their show, and good external carriage, they despise God in their hearts, and have the weapons of war about them; though they are secret enemies and carry their swords under their skirts. They have most proud, stubborn and rebellious hearts, which are ready to rise in opposition, to contend with him, and find fault with his dispensations. Their hearts are full of pride, enmity, stubbornness and blasphemy, which work in them many ways, while they sit under the preaching of the word, and while the spirit

rit of God is striving with them : and they always continue to oppose and resist God, as long as they live in the world ; they never lay down the weapons of their rebellion.

BUT God hath undertaken to deal with them and to subdue them ; and those proud and stubborn hearts, which will not yield to the power of God's word, shall be broken by the power of his hand. If they will not be willing subjects to the golden sceptre, and will not yield to the attractives of his love ; they shall be subject to the force of the iron rod, whether they will or no.

THEM that proudly set up their own righteousness, and their own wills against God, God hath undertaken to bring down : and without doubt it will be done. He hath undertaken to make those who are now regardless of God, regard him. They shall know that he is JEHOVAH. Now they will not own that he is the LORD ; but they shall know it. *Isa. xxvi. 11.* " LORD, when thine hand is lifted up, " they will not see : but they shall see."

Now wicked men not only hate God, but they slight him ; they are not afraid of him. But he will subdue their contempt. When he shall come to take them in hand, they will hate him still ; but they will not slight him ; they will not make light of his power as they now do ; they will see and feel too much of the infinity of his power, to slight it. — They are now wont to slight his wrath ; but then they will slight it no more, they will be infinitely far from it. they will find by sufficient experience that his wrath is not to be slighted : they will learn this to their cost, and they never will forget it.

4. God hath undertaken to rectify their judgments. Now they will not be convinced of those things which

God tells them in his word. Ministers take much pains to convince them, but all is in vain. Therefore God will undertake to convince them, and he will do it effectually.-----Now they will not be convinced of the truth of divine things. They have indeed convincing arguments set before them; they hear and see enough to convince them; yet so prone are they to unbelief and atheism, that divine things never seem to them to be real. But God will hereafter make them seem real.

Now they are always doubting of the truth of the scriptures, questioning whether they be the word of God, and whether the threatenings of scripture be true. But God hath undertaken to convince them that those threatenings are true, and he will make them to know that they are true, so that they will never doubt any more for ever. They will be convinced by dear experience.-----Now they are always questioning whether there be any such place as hell. They hear much about it, but it always seems to them like a dream. But God will make it seem otherwise than a dream.-----Now they are often told of the vanity of the world; but we may as well preach to the beasts, to persuade them of the vanity of earthly things. But God will undertake to convince them of this; he will hereafter give them a thorough conviction of it, so that they shall have a strong sense of the vanity of all these things.

Now ministers often tell sinners of the great importance of an interest in CHRIST, and that that is the one thing needful. They are also told the folly of delaying the care of their souls, and how much it concerns them to improve their opportunity. But the instructions of ministers do not convince them, therefore God will undertake to convince them.

IMPENITENT

IMPENITENT sinners, while in this world, hear how dreadful hell is. But they will not believe that it is so dreadful, as ministers represent. They cannot think that they shall to all eternity suffer such exquisite and horrible torments. But they shall be taught and convinced to purpose, that the representations ministers give of those torments agreeable to the word of God, are no bugbears; and that the wrath of God is indeed as dreadful as they declare.-----Since God hath undertaken to deal with sinners and to rectify their judgments in these matters, he will do it thoroughly; for his work is perfect; when he undertakes to do things, he doth not do them by halves; therefore before he shall have done with sinners, he will convince them effectually, so that they shall never be in danger of relapsing into their former errors any more. He will convince them of their folly and stupidity in entertaining such notions, as they now entertain.

THUS GOD hath undertaken to deal with obstinate unbelievers. They carry things on in great confusion; but we need not be dismayed at it: let us wait and we shall see that God will rectify things. Sinners will not always continue to rebel and despise with impunity. The honour of God will in due time be vindicated; and they shall be subdued and convicted, and shall give an account. There is no sin, not so much as an idle word that they shall speak, but they must give an account of it; Mat. xii. 36.-----And their sins must be fully balanced, and recompensed, and satisfaction obtained. Because judgment against their evil works is not speedily executed, their hearts are fully set in them to do evil. Yet God is a righteous judge; he will see that judgment is executed in due time.

I come

I come now,

II. To show that therefore impenitent sinners shall not avoid their due punishment.----God hath undertaken to inflict it ; he hath engaged to do it ; he takes it as his work, as what properly belongs to him, and we may expect it of him. If he hath sworn by his life, that he will do it ; and if he hath power sufficient ; if he is the living God, doubtless we shall see it done. And that God hath declared that he will punish impenitent sinners, is manifest from many scriptures ; as, Deut. xxxii. 41. " I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me." Deut. vii. 10. " He will not be slack to him that hateth him : he will repay him to his face." Exod. xxxiv. 7. " That will by no means clear the guilty." Nahum i. 3. " The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked."

GOD saith in the text, " I the LORD have spoken it, and will do it ;" which leaves no room to doubt of the actual fulfilment of the threatening in its utmost extent.——Some wicked men have flattered themselves, that although God hath threatened very dreadful things to wicked men for their sins, yet in his heart he never intends to fulfil his threatenings, but only to terrify them, and make them afraid, while they live. But would the infinitely holy God, who is not a man that he should lie, and who speaketh no vain words, utter himself in this manner, *I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it ; I have not only threatened, but I will also fulfil my threatenings ;* when at the same time these words did not agree with his heart, but he secretly knew that though he had spoken, yet he intended not to do it ?—Who is he that dares to entertain such horrid blasphemy in his heart ?

No ;

No; let no impenitent sinner flatter himself so vainly and foolishly. If it were indeed only a man, a being of like impotency and mutability with themselves, who had undertaken to deal with them; they might perhaps with some reason flatter themselves, that they should find some means to avoid the threatened punishment. But since an omniscient, omnipotent, immutable God hath undertaken, vain are all such hopes.

THERE is no hope that possibly they may steal away to heaven, though they die unconverted. There is no hope that they can deceive God by any false show of repentance and faith, and so be taken to heaven through mistake: for the eyes of God are as a flame of fire; they perfectly see through every man; the inmost closet of the heart is all open to him.

THERE is no hope of elcaping the threatened punishment by sinking into nothing at death; like brute creatures. Indeed many wicked men upon their death-beds wish for this. If it were so; death would be nothing to them in comparison with what it now is. But all such wishes are vain.

THERE is no hope of their escaping without notice, when they leave the body. There is no hope that God by reason of the multiplicity of affairs, which he hath to mind; will happen to overlook them, and not take notice of them, when they come to die; and so that their souls will slip away privately, and hide themselves in some secret corner, and so escape divine vengeance.

THERE is no hope that they shall be missed in a crowd, at the day of judgment, and that they can have opportunity to hide themselves in some cave or den of the mountains, or in any secret hole of the earth; and that while so doing they will not be mind-
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ed, by reason of the many things, which will be the objects of attention on that day.----Neither is there any hope that they will be able to croud themselves in among the multitude of the saints at the right hand of the judge, and so go to heaven undiscovered. ---Nor is there any hope that God will alter his mind, or that he will repent of what he hath said; for he is not the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? When did God ever undertake to do any thing and fail? I come now,

III. To show that as impenitent sinners cannot shun the threatened punishment; so neither can they do any thing to deliver themselves from it, or to relieve themselves under it. This is implied in those words of the text, *Can thine hands be strong?* It is with our hands that we make and accomplish things for ourselves. But the wicked in hell will have no strength of hand to accomplish any thing at all for themselves, or to bring to pass any deliverance, or any degree of relief.

1. THEY will not be able in that conflict to overcome their enemy, and so to deliver themselves. God, who will then undertake to deal with them, and will gird himself with might to execute wrath, will be their enemy, and will act the part of an enemy with a witness; and they will have no strength to oppose him. Those, who live negligent of their souls under the light of the gospel, act as if they supposed, that they should be able hereafter to make their part good with God. 1 Cor. x. 22. "Do we provoke the LORD to jealousy? are we stronger than he?"----But they will have no power, no might to resist that omnipotence, which will be engaged against them.

2. THEY will have no strength in their hands to

do any thing to appease God, or in the least to abate the fierceness of his wrath. They will not be able to offer any satisfaction : they will not be able to procure God's pity. Though they cry, God will not hear them. They will find no price to offer to God, in order to purchase any favour, or to pay any part of their debt.

3. THEY will not be able to find any to befriend them, and intercede with God for them. They had the offer of a mediator often made them in this world ; but they will have no offers of such a nature in hell. None will befriend them. They will have no friend in *hell* : all there will be their enemies. They will have no friend in heaven : none of the saints or angels will befriend them : or if they should, it would be to no purpose. There will be no creature that will have any power to deliver them, nor will any ever pity them.

4. NOR will they ever be able to make their escape. They will find no means to break prison and flee. In hell they will be reserved in chains of darkness for ever and ever. Malefactors have often found means to break prison, and escape the hand of civil justice. But none ever escaped out of the prison of hell, which is God's prison. It is a strong prison : it is beyond any finite power, or the united strength of all wicked men and devils, to unlock, or break open the door of that prison. CHRIST hath the key of hell ; " he shuts and no man opens."

5. NOR will they ever be able to find any thing to relieve them in hell. They will never find any resting place there ; any place of respite ; any secret corner, which will be cooler than the rest, where they may have a little respite, a small abatement of the extremity of their torment.-----They never will be able to

to find any cooling stream or fountain, in any part of that world of torment ; no, nor so much as a drop of water to cool their tongues.-----They will find no company to give them any comfort, or to do them the least good. They will find no place, where they can remain, and rest, and take breath for one minute : for they will be tormented with fire and brimstone ; and will have no rest day nor night for ever and ever.

Thus impenitent sinners will be able neither to shun the punishment threatened, nor to deliver themselves from it, nor to find any relief under it.

SER.

S E R M O N X.

The future Punishment of the Wicked
unavoidable and intolerable,

E Z E K I E L, xxii. 14.

*Can thine heart endure? or can thine hands be strong in
the days that I shall deal with thee? I the Lord have
spoken it, and will do it.*

HAVING shown that impenitent sinners will here-
after be able neither to avoid the punishment
threatened, nor to deliver themselves from it, nor to
find any relief under it; I come now,

IV. To show, that neither will they be able to
bear it. Neither will their hands be strong to deliver
themselves from it, nor will their hearts be able to
endure it. It is common with men, when they meet
with calamities in this world, in the first place to en-
deavour to shun them. But if they find, that they
cannot shun them; then after they are come, they en-
deavour to deliver themselves from them, as soon as
they can; or at least to order things so, as to deliver
themselves in some degree. But if they find that
they can by no means deliver themselves, and see that
the case is so that they must bear them; then they set
themselves,

themselves to bear them: they fortify their spirits, and take up a resolution, that they will support themselves under them, as well as they can. They clothe themselves with all the resolution and courage they are masters of, to keep their spirits from sinking under their calamities.

BUT it will be utterly in vain for impenitent sinners, to think to do thus, with respect to the torments of hell. They will not be able to endure them, or at all to support themselves under them: the torment will be immensely beyond their strength. What will it signify for a worm, which is about to be pressed under the weight of some great rock, to be let fall with its whole weight upon it, to collect its strength, to set itself to bear up the weight of the rock, and to preserve itself from being crushed by it?-----Much more in vain will it be for a poor damned soul, to endeavour to support itself, under the weight of the wrath of Almighty God. What is the strength of man, who is but a worm, to support himself against the power of Jehovah, and against the fierceness of his wrath? What is man's strength, when set to bear up against the exertions of infinite power? Mat. xxi. 44. "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

WHEN sinners hear of hell-torments, they sometimes think with themselves; Well, if it shall come to that, that I must go to hell, I will bear it as well as I can: as if by cloathing themselves with resolution and firmness of mind, they would be able to support themselves in some measure: when alas! they will have no resolution, no courage at all. However they shall have prepared themselves, and collected their strength; yet as soon as they shall begin to feel that wrath,

wrath, their hearts will melt and be as water. However before they may seem to harden their hearts, in order to prepare themselves to bear, yet the first moment they feel it, their hearts will become like wax before the furnace. Their courage and resolution will be all gone in an instant; it will vanish away like a shadow in the twinkling of an eye. The stoutest and most sturdy will have no more courage than the feeblest infant: let a man be an infant, or a giant, it will be all one. They will not be able to keep alive any courage, any strength, any comfort, any hope at all.-----I come now as was proposed,

V. To answer an enquiry which may naturally be raised concerning these things.

ENQ. SOME may be ready to say, if this be the case, if impenitent sinners can neither shun future punishment, nor deliver themselves from it, nor bear it; then what will become of them?

ANSW. THEY will wholly sink down into eternal death. There will be that sinking of heart, of which we now cannot conceive. We see how it is with the body, when in extreme pain. The nature of the body will support itself for a considerable time, under very great pain, so as to keep from wholly sinking. There will be great struggles, lamentable groans and panting, and it may be convulsions. These are the strugglings of nature to support itself under the extremity of the pain. There is, as it were, a great loathsomeness in nature to yield to it; it cannot bear wholly to sink.

BUT yet sometimes pain of body is so very extreme and exquisite, that the nature of the body cannot support itself under it; however loath it may be to sink, yet it cannot bear the pain; there are a few struggles and throws and pantings, and it may be a

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strick or two, and then nature yields to the violence of the torments, sinks down, and the body dies. This is the death of the body. So it will be with the soul in hell; it will have no strength or power to deliver itself, and it's torment and horror will be so great, so mighty, so vastly disproportioned to its strength, that having no strength in the least to support itself, although it be infinitely contrary to the nature and inclination of the soul utterly to sink; yet it will sink; it will utterly and totally sink, without the least degree of remaining comfort, or strength, or courage, or hope. And though it will never be annihilated, its being and perception will never be abolished; yet such will be the infinite depth of gloominess that it will sink into; that it will be in a state of death, eternal death.

THE nature of man desires happiness; it is the nature of the soul to crave and thirst after well being: and if it be under misery, it eagerly pants after relief; and the greater the misery is, the more eagerly doth it struggle for help. But if all relief be withholden, all strength overborn, all support utterly gone; then it sinks into the darkness of death.

WE can conceive but little of the matter; we cannot conceive what that sinking of the soul, in such a case, is. But to help your conception, imagine yourself to be cast into a fiery oven, all of a glowing heat, or into the midst of a glowing brick-kiln, or of a great furnace, where your pain would be as much greater than that occasioned by accidentally touching a coal of fire, as the heat is greater. Imagine also that your body were to lie there for a quarter of an hour, full of fire, as full within and without, as a bright coal of fire, all the while full of quick sense; what horror would you feel at the entrance of such a furnace!

furnace ! and how long would that quarter of an hour seem to you ! If it were to be measured by a glass, how long would the glass seem to be a running ! And after you had endured it for one minute, how over-bearing would it be to you, to think that you had it to endure the other fourteen !

BUT what would be the effect on your soul, if you knew you must lie there enduring that torment to the full for twenty-four hours ! And how much greater would be the effect, if you knew you must endure it for a whole year ; and how vastly greater still, if you knew you must endure it for a thousand years !---O then how would your heart sink, if you thought, if you knew, that you must bear it for ever and ever ! that there would be no end ! that after millions of millions of ages, your torment would be no nearer to an end, than ever it was ; and that you never, never should be delivered !

BUT your torment in hell will be immensely greater than this illustration represents. How then will the heart of a poor creature sink under it ! How utterly inexpressible and inconceivable must the sinking of the soul be in such a case !

THIS is the death threatened in the law. This is dying in the highest sense of the word. This is to die sensibly ; to die and know it ; to be sensible of the gloom of death. This is to be undone ; this is worthy of the name of destruction. This sinking of the soul under an infinite weight, which it cannot bear, is the gloom of hell. We read in scripture of the blackness of darkness ; this is it, this is the very thing.-----We read in scripture of sinners being lost, and of their losing their souls : this is the thing intended ; this is to lose the soul ; they that are the subjects of this, are utterly lost.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

THIS subject may be applied in an use of *awaken-
ing* to impenitent sinners.--- What hath been said under
this doctrine is for thee, O impenitent sinner, O poor
wretch, who art in the same miserable state, in which
thou camest into the world; excepting that thou art
loaded with vastly greater guilt, by thine actual sins.
These dreadful things which thou hast heard, are for
thee, who art yet unconverted, and still remainest an
alien and stranger, without CHRIST and without God
in the world. They are for thee, who to this day re-
mainest an enemy to God, and a child of the devil;
even in this remarkable season, when others both
here and elsewhere, far and near, are flocking to
CHRIST; for thee, who hearest the noise, the fame
of these things, but knowest nothing of the power of
godliness in thine own heart.

WHOEVER thou art, whether young or old, little
or great, if thou art in a christless, unconverted state;
this is the wrath, this is the death to which thou art
condemned. This is the wrath that abideth on thee;
this is the hell over which thou hankest, and into which
thou art ready to drop every day and every night.

If thou shalt remain blind, and hard, and dead in
sin a little longer, this destruction will come upon
thee: God hath spoken, and he will do it. It is
vain for thee to flatter thyself with hopes, that thou
shalt avoid it, or to say in thine heart, perhaps it
will not be; perhaps it will not be just so; perhaps
things have been represented worse than they are. If
thou will not be convinced by the word preached to
thee by men, in the name of God; God himself will
undertake to convince thee. Ezek. xiv. 4, 7, 8.

DOTH it seem to thee not real that thou shalt suf-
fer such a dreadful destruction, because it seems to
thee,

thee, that thou dost not deserve it? and because thou dost not see any thing so horrid in thyself, as to answer such a dreadful punishment?----- Why is it that thy wickedness doth not seem bad enough to deserve this punishment? The reason is, that thou lovest thy wickedness; thy wickedness seems good to thee; it appears lovely to thee; thou dost not see any hatefulnes in it, or to be sure, any such hatefulnes as to answer such misery.

BUT know, thou stupid, blind, hardened wretch, that God doth not see, as thou seest with thy polluted eyes: thy sins in his sight are infinitely abominable.----- Thou knowest that thou hast a thousand and a thousand times, made light of the majesty of God. And why should not that majesty, which thou hast thus despised, be manifested in the greatness of thy punishment? Thou hast often heard what a great and dreadful God Jehovah is: but thou hast made so light of it, that thou hast not been afraid of him, thou hast not been afraid to sin against him, nor to go on day after day, by thy sins, to provoke him to wrath, nor to cast his commands under foot, and trample on them. Now why may not God, in the greatness of thy destruction, justly vindicate and manifest the greatness of that majesty, which thou hast despised?

THOU hast despised the mighty power of God; thou hast not been afraid of it. Now why is it not fit, that God should show the greatness of his power in thy ruin. What king is there, who will not show his authority, in the punishment of those subjects that despise it? and who will not vindicate his royal majesty in executing vengeance on those that rise in rebellion? And art thou such a fool as to think, that the great king of heaven and earth, before whom all

other

other kings are as so many grasshoppers, will not vindicate his kingly majesty, on such contemptuous rebels as thou art ! ----- Thou art very much mistaken, if thou thinkest so. If thou be regardless of God's majesty, be it known to thee, God is not regardless of his own majesty ; he taketh care of the honor of it, and he will vindicate it.

THINK it not strange that God should deal so severely with thee, or that the wrath which thou shalt suffer, should be so great. For as great as it is, it is no greater than that love of God, which thou hast despised. The love of God and his grace, condescension and pity to sinners in sending his son into the world to die for them, is every whit as great and wonderful, as this inexpressible wrath. This mercy hath been held forth to thee, and described in its wonderful greatness, hundreds of times, and as often hath it been offered to thee ; but thou wouldest not accept CHRIST ; thou wouldest not have this great love of God ; thou despisedst God's dying love ; thou trampledst the benefits of it under foot. Now why shouldest thou not have wrath as great, as that love and mercy which thou despisest and rejectest ? Doth it seem incredible to thee that God should so harden his heart against a poor sinner, as so to destroy him, and to bear him down with infinite power and merciless wrath ? and is this a greater thing, than it is for thee to harden thy heart, as thou hast done, against infinite mercy, and against the dying love of God ?

DOETH it seem to thee incredible that God should be so utterly regardless of the sinner's welfare, as so to sink him into an infinite abyss of misery ? Is this shocking to thee ? And is it not at all shocking to thee, that thou shouldest be so utterly regardless, as thou hast been, of the honor and glory of the infinite God ?

It arises from thy foolish stupidity and senselessness, and is because thou hast an heart of stone; that thou art so senseless of thine own wickedness, as to think that thou hast not deserved such a punishment, and that it is to thee incredible that it will be inflicted upon thee.----- But if, when all is said and done, thou be not convinced, wait but a little while, and thou wilt be convinced: God will undertake to do the work which ministers cannot do.----- Though judgment against thine evil works be not yet executed, and God now let thee alone; yet he will soon come upon thee with his great power, and then thou shalt know what God is, and what thou art.

FLATTER not thyself, that if these things shall prove true, and the worst shall come, thou wilt set thy self to bear it as well as thou canst. What will it signify, to set thyself to bear, and to collect thy strength to support thyself, when thou shalt fall into the hands of that omnipotent king, Jehovah? He that made thee, can make his sword approach unto thee. His sword is not the sword of man, nor is his wrath the wrath of man. If it were, possibly stoutness might be maintained under it. But it is the fierceness of the wrath of the great God, who is able to baffle and dissipate all thy strength in a moment. He can fill thy poor soul with an ocean of wrath, a deluge of fire and brimstone; or he can make it ten thousand times fuller of torment, than ever an oven was full of fire; and at the same time can fill it with despair of ever seeing any end to its torment, or any rest from its misery: and then where will be thy strength? what will become of thy courage then? what will signify thine attempts to bear?

WHAT art thou in the hands of the great God, who made heaven and earth by speaking a word?

What

What art thou, when dealt with by that strength, which manages all this vast universe, holds the globe of the earth, directs all the motions of the heavenly bodies from age to age, and when the fixed time shall come, will shake all to pieces?---There are other wicked beings a thousand times stronger than thou: there are the great Leviathan's, strong and proud spirits of a gigantick stoutness and hardiness. But how little are they in the hands of the great God! they are less than weak infants; they are nothing, and less than nothing in the hands of an angry God, as will appear at the day of judgment.----Their hearts will be broken; they will sink; they will have no strength nor courage left; they will be as weak as water; their souls will sink down into an infinite gloom, and abyss of death and despair.----Then what will become of thee, a poor worm, when thou shalt fall into the hands of that God, when he shall come to show his wrath, and make his power known on thee?

If the strength of all the wicked men on earth, and of all the devils in hell, were united in one, and thou wert possessed of it all; and if the courage, greatness and stoutness of all their hearts were united in thy single heart, thou wouldest be nothing in the hands of JEHOVAH. If it were all collected, and thou shouldest set thyself to bear as well as thou couldst, all would sink under his great wrath in an instant, and would be utterly abolished: thine hands would drop down at once and thine heart would melt as wax.---The great mountains, the firm rocks cannot stand before the power of God; as fast as they stand, they are tossed hither and thither, and skip like lambs, when God appears in his anger. He can tear the earth in pieces in a moment; yea he can shatter the whole universe, and dash it to pieces at one blow.

How

How then will thine hands be strong, or thine heart endure !

THOU canst not stand before a lion of the forest ; an angry wild beast, if stirred up, will easily tear such an one, as thou art in pieces. Yea not only so, but thou art crushed before the moth. A little thing, a little worm or spider, or some such insect, is able to kill thee. What then canst thou do in the hands of God. It is vain to set the briers and thorns in battle array against glowing flames ; the points of thorns, though sharp, do nothing to withstand the fire.

SOME of you have seen buildings on fire ; imagine therefore with yourselves, what a poor hand you would make at fighting with the flames, if you were in the midst of so great and fierce a fire. You have often seen a spider, or some other noisome insect, when thrown into the midst of a fierce fire, and have observed how immediately it yields to the force of the flames. There is no long struggle, no fighting against the fire, no strength exerted to oppose the heat, or to fly from it ; but it immediately stretches forth itself, and yields ; and the fire takes possession of it, and at once it becomes full of fire, and is burned into a bright coal.----- Here is a little image of what you will be the subjects of in hell, except you repent and fly to CHRIST. However you may think, that you will fortify yourselves, and bear as well as you can ; the first moment you shall be cast into hell, all your strength will sink and be utterly abolished. To encourage yourselves that you will set yourselves to bear hell-torments as well as you can, is just as if a worm, that is about to be thrown into a glowing furnace, should swell and fortify itself, and prepare itself to fight the flames.

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it signify to fight with them ? What an absurd figure would a poor, weak man make, who in a thunder-storm should expect a flash of lightening on his head or his breast, and should go forth sword in hand to oppose it ; when a stream of brimstone would, in an instant, drink up all his spirits and his life, and melt his sword !

CONSIDER these things, all you enemies of God, and rejectors of CHRIST, whether you be old men and women, Christless heads of families, or young people and wicked children. Be assured that if you do not hearken and repent, God intends to show his wrath, and make his power known upon you. He intends to magnify himself exceedingly in sinking you down in hell. He intends to show his great majesty, at the day of judgment, before a vast assembly, in your misery ; before a greater assembly many thousand-fold, than ever yet appeared on earth ; before a vast assembly of saints, and a vast assembly of wicked men, a vast assembly of holy angels, and before all the crew of devils. God will before all these get himself honor in your destruction ; you shall be tormented in the presence of them all.-----Then all will see that God is a great God indeed ; then all will see how dreadful a thing it is to sin against such a God, and to reject such a Saviour, such love and grace, as you have rejected and despised. All will be filled with awe at the great sight, and all the saints and angels will look upon you, and adore that majesty, and that mighty power, and that holiness and justice of God, which shall appear in your ineffable destruction and misery.

It is probable that here are some, who hear me this day, who at this very moment are unawakened, and are in a great degree careless about their souls.

I fear

I fear there are some among us, who are most fearfully hardened: their hearts are harder than the very rocks. It is easier to make impressions upon an adamant, than upon their hearts. I suppose some of you have heard all that I have said with ease and quietness; it appears to you as great, big, sounding words, but doth not reach your hearts. You have heard such things many times: You are old soldiers, and have been too much used to the roaring of heaven's cannon, to be frightened at it. It will therefore probably be in vain for me to say any thing further to you; I will only put you in mind that ere long God will deal with you. I cannot deal with you; you despise what I say; I have no power to make you sensible of your danger and misery, and of the dreadfulfulness of the wrath of God. The attempts of men in this way have often proved vain.

HOWEVER GOD hath undertaken to deal with such men as you are. It is his manner commonly first to let men try their utmost strength; particularly to let ministers try, that thus he may show ministers their own weakness and impotency. And when they have done what they can, and all fails; then God takes the matter into his own hands.-----So it seems by your obstinacy, as if God intended to undertake to deal with you. He will undertake to subdue you; he will see, if he cannot cure you of your senselessness and regardlessness of his threatenings. And you will be convinced; you will be subdued effectually; your hearts will be broken with a witness; your strength will be utterly broken, your courage and hope will sink. God will surely break those, who will not bow.-----God, having girded himself with his power and wrath, hath heretofore undertaken to deal with many hard, stubborn, senseless, obstinate hearts; and he

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never failed, he always did his work thoroughly:

It will not be long before you will be wonderfully changed. You who now hear of hell and the wrath of the great God, and set here in these seats so easy and quiet, and go away so careless; by and by will shake, and tremble, and cry out, and shriek, and gnash your teeth, and will be thoroughly convinced of the vast weight and importance of these great things, which you now despise. You will not then need to hear sermons in order to make you sensible; you will be at a sufficient distance from slighting that wrath and power of God, of which you now hear with so much quietness and indifference.

X

SER

S E R M O N * XI.

The Eternity of Hell Torments.

M A T T H E W, xxv. 46.

These shall go away into everlasting Punishment.

IN this chapter we have the most particular description of the day of judgment, of any that we have in the whole bible. CHRIST here declares that when he shall hereafter sit on the throne of his glory, the righteous and the wicked shall be set before him, and separated one from the other, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. Then we have an account how both will be judged according to their works; how the good works of the one and the evil works of the other, will be rehearsed, and how the sentence shall be pronounced accordingly. We are told what the sentence will be on each, and then in the verse of the text, we have an account of the execution of the sentence on both the righteous and the wicked. In the words of the text is the account of the execution of the sentence on the wicked or the ungodly: concerning which it is to my purpose to observe two things.

1. THE

• DATED April 1739.

1. THE duration of the punishment on which they are here said to enter : it is called *everlasting* punishment.

2. THE time of their entrance on this everlasting punishment ; viz. after the day of judgment, at the end of the world, when all these things, that are of a temporary continuance, shall have come to an end, and even those of them that are most lasting, the frame of the world itself ; the earth which is said to abide for ever ; the antient mountains and everlasting hills ; the sun, moon and stars. When the heavens shall have waxed old like a garment, and as a vesture shall be changed, then shall be the time when the wicked shall enter on their punishment.

DOCTRINE. The misery of the wicked in hell, will be absolutely eternal.

THERE are two diverse opinions that I mean to oppose in this doctrine. One is, that the eternal death that wicked men are threatened with in scripture, signifies no more than eternal annihilation ; that men will be the subjects of eternal death, as they will be slain, and their life finally and forever be extinguished by God's anger ; that God will punish their wickedness by eternally abolishing their being, and so that they shall suffer eternal death in this sense, that they shall be eternally dead, and never more come to life.

THE other opinion which I mean to oppose is, that though the punishment of the wicked shall consist in sensible misery, yet it shall not be absolutely eternal ; but only of a very long continuance.

THEREFORE to establish the doctrine in opposition to these different opinions, I shall undertake to show,

1. THAT it is not contrary to the divine perfections, to inflict on wicked men, a punishment that is absolutely eternal.

2. THAT

II. THAT the eternal death which God threatens, is not annihilation, but an abiding, sensible punishment or misery.

III. THAT this misery will not only continue for a very long time, but will be absolutely without end.

IV. THAT various good ends will be obtained by the eternal punishment of the wicked.

I. I AM to show that it is not contrary to the divine perfections, to inflict on wicked men a punishment that is absolutely eternal.

THIS is the sum of the objections usually made against this doctrine, that it is inconsistent with the justice, and especially with the *mercy* of God. And some say, If it be strictly *just*, yet how can we suppose that a merciful God can bear eternally to torment his creatures,

I. THEN I shall briefly show that it is not inconsistent with the justice of God to inflict an eternal punishment. To evince this, I shall use only one argument, viz. that sin is heinous enough to deserve such a punishment, and such a punishment is no more than proportionable to the evil or demerit of sin. If the evil of sin be infinite, as the punishment is, then it is manifest that the punishment is no more than proportionable to the sin punished, and is no more than sin deserves. And if the obligation to love, honor and obey God be infinite, then sin which is the violation of this obligation, is a violation of infinite obligation, and so is an infinite evil. Again, if God be infinitely worthy of love, honor and obedience, then our obligation to love and honor and obey him is infinitely great,-----So that God being infinitely glorious, or infinitely worthy of our love, honor and obedience; our obligation to love, honor and ob

him, and so to avoid all sin is infinitely great. Again, our obligation to love, honor and obey God being infinitely great, sin is the violation of infinite obligation, and so is an infinite evil. Once more, sin being an infinite evil, deserves an infinite punishment, an infinite punishment is no more than it deserves: Therefore such punishment is just; which was the thing to be proved.-----There is no evading the force of this reasoning, but by denying that God, the sovereign of the universe, is infinitely glorious; which I presume none of my hearers will adventure to do.

2. I AM to show that it is not inconsistent with the *mercy* of God to inflict an eternal punishment on wicked men. It is an unreasonable and unscriptural notion of the mercy of God, that he is merciful in such a sense, that he cannot bear that penal justice should be executed. This is to conceive of the mercy of God as a passion to which his nature is so subject, that God is liable to be moved, and affected, and overcome by seeing a creature in misery, so that he cannot bear to see justice executed: which is a most unworthy and absurd notion of the mercy of God, and would, if true, argue great weakness.-----It would be a great defect and not a perfection in the sovereign and supreme judge of the world, to be merciful in such a sense, that he could not bear to have penal justice executed. It is a very unscriptural notion of the mercy of God. The scriptures every where represent the mercy of God as free and sovereign, and not that the exercises of it are necessary, so that God cannot bear justice should take place. The scriptures abundantly speak of it as the glory of the divine attribute of *mercy*, that it is free and sovereign in its exercises; and not that it is so, that God cannot help

help but deliver sinners from misery. This is a mean and most unworthy idea of the divine mercy.

It is most absurd also as it is contrary to plain fact. For if there be any meaning in the objection, this is supposed in it, that all misery of the creature, whether just or unjust, is in itself contrary to the nature of God. For if his mercy be of such a nature, that a very great degree of misery, though just, is contrary to his nature: then it is only to add to the mercy, and then a less degree of misery is contrary to his nature; again to add further to it, and a still less degree of misery is contrary to his nature. And so the mercy of God being infinite, all misery must be contrary to his nature; which we see to be contrary to fact: for we see that God in his providence, doth indeed inflict very great calamities on mankind even in this life.

HOWEVER strong such kind of objections against the eternal misery of the wicked, may seem to the carnal, senseless hearts of men, as though it were against God's justice and mercy; yet their seeming strength, and its seeming to be incredible that God should give over any of his creatures to such a dreadful calamity as eternal, helpless misery and torment, altogether arises from a want of a sense of the infinite evil, odiousness and provocation, that there is in sin. Hence it seems to us not suitable that any poor creature should be the subject of such misery, because we have no sense of any thing abominable and provoking in any creature answerable to it. If we had, then this infinite calamity would not seem unsuitable. For one thing would but appear answerable and proportionable to another, and so the mind would rest in it as fit and suitable, and no more than what is proper to be ordered by the just, holy and good governor of the world.

THAT

THAT this is so, we may be convinced by this consideration, viz. that when we hear or read, as sometimes we do, of very horrid things committed by some men, as for instance, some horrid instance of cruelty, it may be to some poor innocent child, or some holy martyr; when we read or hear how such and such persons delighted themselves in torturing them with lingering torments; what terrible distress the poor, innocent creatures were in, under their hands, for many days together; and their cruel persecutors, having no regard to their shrieks and cries, only sported themselves with their misery, and would not save even to put an end to their lives:-----I say, when we hear or read of such things, we have a sense of the evil of ~~them~~, and they make a deep impression on our minds. Hence it seems just, and not only so, but every way fit and suitable that God should inflict a very terrible punishment on persons who have perpetrated such wickedness: It seems no way disagreeable to any perfection of the judge of the world; we can think of it without being at all shocked. The reason is, that we have a sense of the evil of their conduct, and a sense of the proportion there is between the evil or demerit of their conduct and the punishment.

Just so if we saw a proportion between the evil of sin and eternal punishment, if we saw something in wicked men that should appear as hateful to us, as eternal misery appears dreadful; something that should as much stir up indignation and detestation, as eternal misery does terror; all objections against this doctrine would vanish at once. Though now it seem incredible; though when we hear of it and are so often told of it, we know not how to realize it; though when we hear of such a degree and duration of torments,

ments,

ments, as are held forth in this doctrine, and think what eternity is, it is ready to seem impossible, that such torments should be inflicted on poor, feeble creatures, by a creator of infinite mercy : yet this arises principally from these two causes, (1.) That it is so contrary to the depraved inclinations of mankind, they are so averse to the truth of this doctrine, they hate to believe it, and cannot bear it should be true. (2.) That they see not the suitability of eternal punishment to the evil of sin ; they see not that eternal punishment is proportionable and no more than proportionable to the demerit of sin.

HAVING thus shown that the eternal punishment of the wicked is not inconsistent with the divine perfections, I shall now proceed further, and undertake to show that it is so far from being inconsistent with the divine perfections, that those perfections evidently require it ; i. e. they require that sin should have so great a punishment, either in the person who has committed it, or in a surety ; and therefore with respect to those who believe not in the surety, and have no interest in him, the divine perfections require that this punishment should be inflicted on them.

THIS appears, as it is not only not unsuitable, that sin should be thus punished ; but it is positively suitable, decent and proper.-----If this be made to appear that it is positively suitable, that sin should be thus punished, then it will follow, that the perfections of God require it ; for certainly the perfections of God require that that should be done, which is proper to be done. The perfection, and excellency of the nature of God require, that that should take place, which is perfect, excellent and proper in its own nature. But that sin should be punished eternally is such a thing ; which appears by the following considerations.

1. It is suitable that God should infinitely hate sin, and be an infinite enemy to it. Sin, as I have before shown, is an infinite evil, and therefore is infinitely odious and detestable. It is proper that God should hate every evil, and hate it according to its odious and detestable nature. And sin being infinitely evil and odious, it is proper that God should hate it infinitely.

2. If infinite hatred of sin be suitable to the divine character, then the expressions of such hatred are also suitable to his character. If it be suitable that God should hate sin, then it is suitable he should express that hatred. Because that which is suitable to be, is suitable to be expressed : that which is lovely in itself, is lovely when it appears. If it be suitable that God should be an infinite enemy to sin, or that he should hate it infinitely, then it is suitable that he should act as such an enemy. No possible reason can be given why it is not suitable for God to *act* as such an one, as it is suitable for him to *be*. If it be suitable that he should hate and have enmity against sin, then it is suitable for him to express that hatred and enmity, in that to which hatred and enmity by its own nature tends. . . . But certainly hatred in its own nature tends to opposition, and to set itself against that which is hated, and to procure its evil and not its good : and that in proportion to the hatred. Great hatred naturally tends to the great evil, and infinite hatred to the infinite evil, of its object.

WHENCE it follows, that if it be suitable that there should be infinite hatred of sin in God, as I have shown it is, it is suitable that he should execute an infinite punishment on it ; and so the perfections of God require that he should punish sin with an infinite, or which is the same thing, with an eternal punishment.

THUS

Thus we see not only the great objection against this doctrine answered, but the truth of the doctrine established by reason.-----I now proceed further to establish it, by considering the remaining particulars under the doctrine.

II. THAT eternal death or punishment, which God threatens to the wicked, is not annihilation, but an abiding, sensible punishment or misery.

THE truth of this proposition will appear by the following particulars.

1. THE scripture every where represents the punishment of the wicked, as implying very extreme pains and sufferings; but a state of annihilation is no state of suffering at all. Persons annihilated have no sense or feeling of pain or pleasure, and much less do they feel that punishment which carries in it an *extreme* pain or suffering.-----They no more suffer to eternity, than they did suffer from eternity.

2. IT is agreeable both to scripture and reason, to suppose, that the wicked will be punished in such a manner, that they shall be sensible of the punishment they are under; that they should be sensible, that now God has executed and fulfilled what he threatened, and which they disregarded, and would not believe; that they should know themselves, that justice takes place upon them; that they should see and find that God vindicates that majesty which they despised; that they should see that God is not so despicable a being as they thought him to be; that they should be sensible, for what they are punished, while they are under the threatened punishment; that they should be sensible of their own guilt, and should remember their former opportunities and obligations, and should see their own folly and God's justice.--- If the eternal punishment threatened be eternal annihilation

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hilation, when it is inflicted, they will never know that it is inflicted ; they will never know that God is just in their punishment, or that they have their deserts. And how is this agreeable to the scripture, in which God threatens that he will repay the wicked *to his face*, Deut. vii. 10? And to that in Job, xxi. 19, 20. Speaking there of God's punishing wicked men, it is said, " God rewardeth him and he shall know it ; his eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty " ? And to that in Ezekiel xxii, 21, 22. " Yea I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof, as silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof ; and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you " ?-----And how it is agreeable to that expression so often annexed to the threatenings of God's wrath against wicked men, *And ye shall know that I am the Lord ?*

3. THE scripture teaches that the wicked will suffer different degrees of torment, according to the different aggravations of their sins. Mat. v. 22. " Who-soever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment : and who-soever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council : but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire." Here CHRIST teaches us that the torments of wicked men will be different in different persons, according to the different degrees of their guilt.—It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha, for Tyre and Sidon, than for the cities where most of CHRIST's mighty works were wrought.—Again, our LORD assures us, That he that knoweth his LORD's will, and prepareth not himself, nor doth according to his will, shall

shall be beaten with *many* stripes. But he that knoweth not, and committeth things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes. — These several passages of scripture infallibly prove that there will be different degrees of punishment in hell ; which is utterly inconsistent with the supposition, that that punishment consists in annihilation, in which there can be no degrees, but is the same thing to every one who is the subject of it.

4. The scriptures are very express, and abundant in this matter, that the eternal punishment of the wicked will consist in sensible misery and torment, and not in annihilation. — What is said of Judas is worthy to be observed here, “ It had been good for that man, if he had not been born ; ” Mat. xxvi. 24. — This seems plainly to teach us that the punishment of the wicked is such that their existence, upon the whole is worse than non-existence. But if their punishment consists merely in annihilation, this is not true. — The wicked, in their punishment, are said *to weep, and wail, and gnash their teeth*; which implies not only real existence, but life, knowledge and activity, and that they are in a very sensible and exquisite manner affected with their punishment. — In Isaiah xxxiii. 14, Sinners in the state of their punishment are represented *to dwell* with everlasting burnings. But if they are only turned into nothing, where is the foundation for this representation ? It is absurd to say that sinners will *dwell* with annihilation ; for there is no *dwelling* in the case. It is also absurd to call annihilation, a *burning*, which implies a state of existence, sensibility and extreme pain ; whereas in annihilation there is neither one nor another of these. — The state of the future punishment of the wicked is evidently represented to be a state of existence and sensibility,

sibility, when it is said, that they shall be cast into a lake of fire and brimstone. How can this expression with any propriety be understood to mean a state of annihilation? — Yea they are expressly said to have *no rest* day nor night, but to be *tormented* with fire and brimstone for ever and ever, Rev. xx. 10. But annihilation is a state of *rest*, a state in which not the least *torment* can possibly be suffered. — The rich man in hell *lifted up his eyes being in torment* and *saw* Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, and entered into a particular *conversation* with Abraham; all which proves that he was not annihilated.

THE spirits of ungodly men before the resurrection, are not in a state of annihilation, but in a state of misery; they are spirits in prison, as the apostle saith of them that were drowned in the flood; 1 Pet. iii. 19.

— And this appears very plainly from the instance of the rich man, before mentioned, if we consider him as representing the wicked in their separate state, between death and the resurrection. But if the wicked even *then*, are in a state of *torment*, much more will they be, when they shall come to suffer that which is the proper punishment of their sins.

ANNIHILATION is not so great a calamity but that some men have undoubtedly chosen it, rather than such a state of suffering, as they have been in, even in this life. This was the case of Job, a good man. But if a good man in this world may suffer that which is worse than annihilation, doubtless the proper punishment of the wicked, in which God means to manifest his peculiar abhorrence of their wickedness, will be a calamity vastly greater still; and therefore cannot be annihilation. That must be a very mean and contemptible testimony of God's wrath towards those who have rebelled against his crown and dignity, have
broken

broken his laws, and despised both his vengeance and his grace, which is not so great a calamity, as some of his true children have suffered in life.

THE eternal punishment of the wicked is said to be the *second death*, once and again, as Rev. xx. 14. and xxi. 8.-----It is doubtless called the second death in reference to the death of the body; and as the death of the body is ordinarily attended with great pain and distress, so the like, or something vastly greater, is implied in calling the eternal punishment of the wicked; the *second death*; and there would be no propriety in calling it so, if it consisted merely in annihilation. And this second death wicked men will suffer; for it cannot be called the second death, with respect to any other than men; it cannot be called so with respect to devils, as they die no temporal death, which is the first death. In Rev. ii. 11. "It is said, "He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death;" implying that all who do not overcome their lusts, but live in sin, shall suffer the second death.

AGAIN, wicked men will suffer the same kind of death with the devils; as in verse 25. of the context "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Now the punishment of the devil is not annihilation, but torment: he therefore trembles for fear of it; not for fear of being annihilated, he would be glad of that. What he is afraid of is torment, as appears by Luke viii. 28. Where he cries out and beseeches CHRIST that he would not torment him before the time. And it is said, Rev. xx. 10. The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever,

It is strange how men will go directly against so plain and full revelations of scripture, as to suppose, notwithstanding all these things, that the eternal punishment threatened against the wicked, signifies no more, than annihilation.

III. As the future punishment of the wicked consists in sensible misery; so it shall not only continue for a very long time, but shall be absolutely without end.

Of those who have held that the torments of hell are not absolutely eternal, there have been two sorts. (1.) Some suppose that in the threatenings of everlasting punishment, the terms used, do not necessarily import a proper eternity, but only a very long duration. (2.) Others suppose that if they do import a proper eternity, yet we cannot necessarily conclude thence, that God will fulfil his threatenings.

Therefore I shall,

FIRST, show that the threatenings of eternal punishment do very plainly and fully import a proper, absolute eternity, and not merely a long duration.

This appears,

1. BECAUSE when the scripture speaks of the wicked's being sentenced to their punishment, at the time when all temporal things are come to an end, it then speaks of it as everlasting, as in the text and elsewhere. -----It is true that the term *forever* is not always in scripture used to signify eternity. Sometimes it means, as long as a man liveth. In this sense it is said, that the Hebrew servant, who chose to abide with his master, should have his ear bored, and should serve his master *forever*. -----Sometimes it means, during the continuance of the state and church of the Jews. In this sense several laws which were peculiar to that church, and were to continue in force no longer than that church

church should last, are called *statutes forever*. See *Exod. xxvii 21. Chap. xxviii. 43. &c.*----- Sometimes it means as long as the world stands. So in *Eccles. i. 4.* One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth *forever*.

AND this last is the longest temporal duration, that such a term is ever used to signify. There is no instance of using such a term, for a longer duration, when it signifies a temporal duration: For the duration of the world is doubtless the longest of any of those things, that are temporal, as its beginning was the earliest of any of those things, that are temporal. Therefore when the scripture speaks of things as being before the foundation of the world, it means that they existed from eternity and before the beginning of time. So those things which continue after the end of the world, are eternal things, and are after the end of time.-----Doubtless when the temporal world is at an end, there will be an end to temporal things. When the time comes that heaven and earth are shaken and removed, those things that remain will be things that cannot be shaken, but will remain for ever, *Heb. xii. 26, 27.*-----This visible world contains all things that are seen and are temporal; and therefore when that is at an end, there will be an end of all things that are temporal, and therefore the things that remain after that, will be eternal.

BUT the punishment of the wicked will not only remain after the end of the world, but is called everlasting after that, as in the text, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." So in *2 Thes. i. 9, 10.* "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints," &c.-----Now

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what can be meant by a thing's being everlasting, after all temporal things are come to an end, but that it is absolutely without end?

2. SUCH expressions are used to set forth the duration of the punishment of the wicked, as are never used in the scriptures of the New-Testament to signify any thing but a proper eternity. It is said not only that that punishment shall be forever, but *for ever and ever*. Rev. xiv. 11; "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up *for ever and ever*." Rev. xx. 10; "shall be tormented day and night, *for ever and ever*."

-----Doubtless the New-Testament has some expression to signify a proper eternity, of which it has so often occasion to speak. But it is ignorant of any higher expression than this; if this do not signify an absolute eternity, there is none that does.

3. THE scripture uses the same way of speaking to set forth the eternity of the punishment of the wicked; that it uses to set forth the eternity of the happiness of the righteous; or the eternity of God himself. Mat. xxv. 46. These shall go away into *everlasting* punishment: but the righteous into life *eternal*. The words *everlasting* and *eternal*, in the original, are the very same. Rev. xxii. 5. And they (the saints) shall reign *for ever and ever*. And the scripture has no higher expression to signify the eternity of God himself, than that of his being *for ever and ever*, as Rev. iv. 9. "To him who sat on the throne, who liveth *for ever and ever*," and in the 10th verse, and in ch. v. 14. and ch. x. 6. and ch. xv. 7.

AGAIN, the scripture expresses God's eternity by this, that it shall be forever, after the world is come to an end; Psal. cii. xxvi, 27. "They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change

“them, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.”

4. THE scripture says that wicked men shall not be delivered, till they have paid the uttermost farthing of their debt; Mat. v. 26. Nor till they have paid the last mite; Luke x 59. i. e. the utmost that is deserved, and all mercy is excluded by this expression. But we have shown that they deserve an infinite, an endless punishment.

5. THE scripture says absolutely, that their punishment shall not have an end. Mark ix. 44. “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” Now it will not do to say, That the meaning is, Their worm shall live a great while, or that it shall be a great while before their fire is quenched. If ever the time comes, that their worm shall die; if ever there shall be a quenching of the fire at all, then it is not true, that their worm dieth not, and that the fire is not quenched. For if there be a dying of the worm, and a quenching of the fire, let it be at what time it will, nearer or further off, it is equally contrary to such a regation, *it dieth not, it is not quenched.*

SECONDLY. THERE are others who allow, that the expressions of the threatenings, do denote a proper eternity, but then, they say, it doth not certainly follow, that the punishment will really be eternal; because, say they, God may threaten, and yet not fulfil his threatenings. Though they allow that the threatenings are positive, and peremptory, without any reserve, yet they say God is not obliged to fulfil absolute, positive threatenings, as he is, absolute promises. Because in promises a right is conveyed, that the creature, to whom the promises are made, will claim it; but there is no danger of the creature's claiming a right by a threatening.-----Therefore I am now showing that what God has positively declared in the

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matter, does indeed make it certain, that it shall be as he has declared. To this end I shall mention two things ;

I. It is selfevidently contrary to the divine truth, positively to declare, any thing to be real, whether past, present, or to come, which G^d at the same time knows is not so. Absolutely threatening that any thing shall be, is the same as absolutely declaring, that it is to be. For any to suppose that G^d absolutely declares that any thing will be, which he at the same time knows will not be, is blasphemy, if there be any such thing as blasphemy.

INDEED it is very true, that there is no obligation on God, arising from the claim of the creature, as there is in promises. They seem to reckon the wrong way, who suppose the necessity of the execution of the threatening, to arise from a proper obligation on God to the creature, to execute, consequent on his threatening. For indeed the certainty of the execution arises the other way ; viz. on the obligation there was on the omniscient God, in threatening, to conform his threatening to what he knew would be future in execution. Though strictly speaking God is not properly obliged to the creature, to execute because he has threatened ; yet he was obliged not absolutely to threaten if at the same time he knew, that he should not, or would not fulfil : because this would not have been consistent with his truth.---- So that from the truth of God, there is an inviolable connection between positive threatenings and execution. They that suppose, that God absolutely threatened, positively declared, that he would do, contrary to what he knew would come to pass, do therein suppose that he absolutely threatened contrary to what he knew to be truth. And how any one can speak
contrary

contrary to what he knows to be truth, in declaring, promising, or threatening, or any other way, consistently with inviolable truth, is inconceivable.

THREATENINGS are significations of something; and if they are made consistently with truth, they are true significations, or significations of truth, or significations of that which shall be. If absolute threatenings are significations of any thing, they are significations of the futurity of the things threatened. But if the futurity of the things threatened, be not true and real, then how can the threatening be a true signification. And if God, in them, speaks contrary to what he knows and contrary to what he intends, how he can speak true, is inconceivable.

ABSOLUTE threatenings are a kind of predictions, and though God is not properly obliged by any claim of our's, to fulfil predictions, unless they are of the nature of promises; yet it certainly would be contrary to truth, to predict and say such a thing would come to pass, which he knew at the same time, would not come to pass. Threatenings are declarations of something future, and they must be declarations of future truth, if they are true declarations. It's being future alters not the case any more than if it were present. It is equally contrary to truth, to declare contrary to what, at the same time is known to be truth, whether it be of things past, present, or to come: for all are alike to God.

BESIDE, we have often declarations in scripture of the future eternal punishment of the wicked, in the proper form of predictions, and not in the form of threatenings. So in the text, These shall go away into everlasting punishment. So in those frequent assertions of eternal punishment in the Revelation, some of which I have already quoted. The Revelation is prophecy, and is so called in the book itself; so are the

declarations of eternal punishment.-----The like declarations we have also in many other places of scripture.

2. The doctrine of those who teach that it is not certain, that God will fulfil those absolute threatenings is blasphemous another way ; and that is, as God according to their supposition was obliged to make use of a fallacy to govern the world. They own that it is needful that men should apprehend themselves liable to an eternal punishment, that they might thereby be restrained from sin, and that God has threatened such a punishment, for the very end that they might believe themselves exposed to it. But what an unworthy opinion does this convey of God and his government, of his infinite majesty, and wisdom, and all-sufficiency !-----Beside, they suppose that though God has made use of such a fallacy, yet it is not such an one but that they have detected him in it. Though God intended men should believe it to be certain, that sinners are liable to an eternal punishment ; yet they suppose, that they have been so cunning as to find out that it is not certain. And so that God hath not laid his design so deep, but that such cunning men as they can discern the cheat and defeat the design : because they have found out, that there is no necessary connexion between the threatening of eternal punishment and the execution of that threatening.

CONSIDERING these things, is it not greatly to be wondered at, that the great archbishop *Tillotson*, who has made so great a figure among the new fashioned divines, should advance such an opinion as this ?

BEFORE I conclude this head, it may be proper for me to answer an objection or two, that may arise in the minds of some.

1. It may be here said, We have instances, where-
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in God hath not fulfilled his threatenings; as his threatening to Adam and in him to mankind, that they should *surely* die, if they should eat the forbidden fruit. I answer, It is not true that God did not fulfil that threatening: he fulfilled it, and will fulfil it in every jot and tittle.-----When God said, "Thou shalt surely die," if we respect spiritual death, it was fulfilled in Adam's person in the day that he ate. God immediately took away his image, his holy spirit, and original righteousness, which was the highest and best life of our first parents; and they were immediately in a doleful state of spiritual death.

If we respect temporal death, that was also fulfilled: he brought death upon himself and all his posterity, and he virtually suffered that death on that very day on which he ate. His body was brought into a corruptible, mortal and dying condition, and so it continued till it was dissolved.-----If we look at eternal death, and indeed all that death, which was comprehended in the threatening, it was properly speaking fulfilled in CHRIST. When God said to Adam, If thou eatest, thou shalt die, he spake not only to him, and of him personally; but the words respected mankind, Adam and his race, and doubtless were so understood by him. His offspring were to be looked upon as sinning in him, and so should die with him. The words do as justly allow of an imputation of death, as of sin; they are as well consistent with dying in a surety, as with sinning in one. Therefore the threatening is fulfilled in the death of CHRIST, the surety.

2. ANOTHER objection may arise from God's threatening to Nineveh. He threatened that in forty days Nineveh should be destroyed, which yet he did not fulfil.-----I answer, that threatening could

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justly be looked upon no otherwise, than as conditional. It was of the nature of a warning, and not of an absolute denunciation. Why was Jonah sent to the Ninevites, but to give them warning, that they might have opportunity to repent, reform, and avert the approaching destruction? God had no other design or end in sending the prophet to them, but that they might be warned and tried by him, as God warned the Israelites, and warned Judah and Jerusalem before their destruction. Therefore the prophets, together with their prophecies of approaching destruction, joined earnest exhortations to repent and reform; that it might be averted.

No more could justly be understood to be certainly threatened, than that Nineveh should be destroyed in forty days, *continuing as it was*. For it was for their wickedness that that destruction was threatened, and so the Ninevites took it. Therefore when the cause was removed, the effect ceased.-----It was contrary to God's known manner, to threaten punishment and destruction for sin here in this world absolutely, so that it should come upon the persons threatened unavoidably, let them repent and reform and do what they would; agreeably to Jer. xviii. 7, 8.

"At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation,
 "and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to
 "pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation against
 "whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I
 "will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto
 "them."-----So that all threatenings of this nature

had a condition implied in them, according to the known and declared manner of God's dealing. And the Ninevites did not take it as an absolute sentence or denunciation: if they had, they would have despaired of any benefit by fasting and reformation.

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BUT the threatenings of eternal wrath are positive and absolute. There is nothing in the word of God, from which we can gather any condition. The only opportunity of escaping is in this world; this is the only state of trial, wherein we have any offers of mercy, or there is any place for repentance.

IV. I SHALL mention several good and important ends, which will be obtained by the eternal punishment of the wicked.

1. HEREBY GOD vindicates his injured majesty. Wherein sinners cast contempt upon it, and trample it in the dust, GOD vindicates and honors it, and makes it appear, as it is indeed, infinite, by showing that it is infinitely dreadful to condemn or offend it.

2. GOD glorifies his justice.----The glory of GOD is the greatest good; it is that which is the chief end of the creation; it is a thing of greater importance than any thing else. But this is one way wherein GOD will glorify himself, as in the eternal destruction of ungodly men, he will glorify his justice. Therein he will appear as a just governor of the world. The vindictive justice of GOD will appear strict; exact, awful and terrible, and therefore glorious.

3. GOD hereby indirectly glorifies his grace on the vessels of mercy.-----The saints in heaven will behold the torments of the damned: "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. Isai. lxvi. 24. "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcases of the men; that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be abhorring unto all flesh." And in Rev. xiv. 1. It is said; that they shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the lamb.---So they will be tormented in the presence also of glorified saints.

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HEREBY the saints will be made the more sensible how great their salvation is. When they shall see how great the misery is, from which God hath saved them, and how great a difference he hath made between their state, and the state of others, who were by nature, and perhaps by practice, no more sinful and ill-deserving than they, it will give them more of a sense of the wonderfulness of God's grace to them. Every time they look upon the damned, it will excite in them a lively and admiring sense of the grace of God, in making them so to differ. This the apostle informs us is one end of the damnation of ungodly men; Rom. ix. 22, 23. "What if God willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known *the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy*, which he had afore prepared unto glory"? ----- The view of the misery of the damned will double the ardour of the love and gratitude of the saints in heaven.

4. THE sight of hell-torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever. It will not only make them more sensible of the greatness and freeness of the grace of God in their happiness; but it will really make their happiness the greater, as it will make them more sensible of their own happiness; it will give them a more lively relish of it; it will make them prize it more. When they see others, who were of the same nature, and born under the same circumstances, plunged in such misery, and they so distinguished, O it will make them sensible, how happy they are. A sense of the opposite misery, in all cases greatly increases the relish of any joy or pleasure.

The sight of the wonderful power, the great and

dreadful majesty and awful justice and holiness of God manifested in the eternal punishment of ungodly men, will make them prize his favour and love, vastly the more; and they will be so much the more happy in the enjoyment of it.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

I. FROM what hath been said, we may learn the folly and madness of the greater part of mankind, in that for the sake of present momentary gratification, they run the venture of enduring all these eternal torments. They prefer a small pleasure, or a little wealth, or a little earthly honor and greatness, which can last but for a moment, to an escape from this punishment.----If it be true that the torments of hell are eternal, what will it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? What is there in this world, which is not a trifle, and lighter than vanity, in comparison with these eternal things?

How mad are men, who so often hear of these things and pretend to believe them; who can live but a little while, a few years; who do not even expect to live here longer than others of their species, ordinarily do; and who yet are careless about what becomes of themselves in another world, where there is no change and no end!----How mad are they, when they hear that if they go on in sin, they shall be eternally miserable, that they are not moved by it, but hear it with as much carelessness and coldness, as if they were no way concerned in the matter; when they know not but that it may be their case, that they may be suffering these torments before a week is at end, and that if it should be so, it would be no strange thing, no other than a common thing!

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How can men be so careless of such a matter as their own eternal and desperate destruction and torment? What a strange stupor and senselessness possesses the hearts of men! How common a thing is it to see men, who are told from sabbath to sabbath of eternal misery, and who are as mortal as other men, so careless about it, that they seem not to be at all restrained by it from whatever their souls lust after! It is not half so much their care, to escape eternal misery, as it is to get money and land, and to be considerable in the world, and to gratify their senses. Their thoughts are much more exercised about these things, and much more of their care and concern is about them. Eternal misery, though they lie every day exposed to it, is a thing neglected, it is but now and then thought of, and then with a great deal of stupidity, and not with concern enough to stir them up to do any thing considerable in order to escape it. They are not sensible that it is worth their while to take any considerable pains in order to it. And if they do take pains for a little while, they soon leave off, and something else takes up their thoughts and concern.

Thus you will see it to be among young and old. Multitudes of those who are in youth, lead a careless life, taking little care about their salvation. So you may see it to be among persons of middle age. So it is still with many, when advanced in years, and when they certainly draw near to the grave.-----Yet these persons will seem to acknowledge, that the great part of men go to hell and suffer eternal misery, and this through carelessness about it. However, they will do the same.-----How strange is it that men enjoy themselves and be at rest, when they are hanging over eternal burnings; at the same time having no lease of their lives, and not knowing how

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soon the thread, by which they hang, will break, nor indeed do they pretend to know; and if it breaks, they are gone, they are lost for ever, and there is no remedy! Yet they trouble not themselves much about it; nor will they hearken to those who cry to them, and intreat them to take care for themselves and labour to get out of that dangerous condition: they are not willing to take so much pains: they choose not to be diverted from amusing themselves with those toys and vanities which they have in hand. Thus, well might the wise man say, as in Eccl. ix. 3. "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil. Madness is in their heart while they live; and after that they go to the dead."

How much wiser are those few, who make it their main business to lay a foundation for eternity, to secure their salvation!

2. I SHALL improve this subject in an use of *exhortation* to sinners, to take care to escape these eternal torments. If they be eternal, one would think that would be enough to awaken your concern, and excite your diligence. If the punishment be eternal it is infinite, as we said before, and therefore no other evil, no death, no temporary torment that ever you heard of, or that you can imagine, is any thing in comparison with it, but is as much less and less considerable, not only as a grain of sand is less than the whole universe, but as it is less than the boundless space, which encompasses the universe.-----Therefore here,

(1.) BE entreated to consider attentively how great and awful a thing eternity is. Although you cannot comprehend it the more by considering, you may be made more sensible that it is not a thing to be disregarded.-----Do but consider what it is

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suffer extreme torment for ever and ever ; to suffer it day and night, from one day to another, from one year to another, from one age to another, from one thousand ages to another, and so adding age to age, and thousands to thousands in pain, in wailing and lamenting, groaning, and shrieking, and gnashing your teeth ; with your souls full of dreadful grief and amazement, with your bodies and every member full of racking torture, without any possibility of getting ease ; without any possibility of moving God to pity, by your cries ; without any possibility of hiding yourselves from him ; without any possibility of diverting your thoughts from your pain ; without any possibility of obtaining any manner of mitigation, or help, or change for the better any way.

(2.) Do but consider how dreadful despair will be in such torment. How dismal will it be, when you are under these racking torments, to know assuredly that you never, never shall be delivered from them ; to have no hope : when you shall wish that you might but be turned into nothing, but shall have no hope of it ; when you shall wish that you might be turned into a toad or a serpent, but shall have no hope of it ; when you would rejoice, if you might but have any relief, after you shall have endured these torments millions of ages, but shall have no hope of it ; when after you shall have worn out the age of the sun, moon and stars in your dolorous groans and lamentations, without rest day or night, or one minute's ease, yet you shall have no hope of ever being delivered ; when after you shall have worn out a thousand more such ages, yet you shall have no hope, but shall know that you are not one whit nearer to the end of your torments ; but that still there are the same groans, the same shrieks, the same doleful cries incessantly to be made by you, and that the smother of your

your torment shall still ascend up forever and ever; and that your souls, which shall have been agitated with the wrath of God all this while, yet will still exist to bear more wrath; your bodies, which shall have been burning and roasting all this while in these glowing flames, yet shall not have been consumed, but will remain to roast through an eternity yet, which will not have been at all shortened by what shall have been past.

You may by considering make yourselves more sensible, than you ordinarily are; but it is a little you can conceive of what it is to have no hope in such torments.

How sinking would it be to you to endure such pain, as you have felt in this world, without any hopes, and to know that you never should be delivered from it, nor have one minute's rest! You can now scarcely conceive how doleful that would be. How much more, to endure the vast weight of the wrath of God, without hope! The more the damned in hell think of the eternity of their torments, the more amazing will it appear to them; and alas! they are not able to avoid thinking of it; they will not be able to keep it out of their minds. Their tortures will not divert them from it, but will fix their attention to it.—O how dreadful will eternity appear to them, after they shall have been thinking on it for ages together, and shall have had so long an experience of their torments!—The damned in hell will have two infinites perpetually to amaze them, and swallow them up: One is an infinite God, whose wrath they will bear, and whom they will behold their perfect and irreconcilable enemy:—The other is the infinite duration of their torment.

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comprehensive knowledge of eternity, their sorrow and grief would be infinite in degree. The comprehensive view of so much sorrow, which they must endure, would cause infinite grief for the present. Though they will not have a comprehensive knowledge of it, yet they will doubtless have a vastly more lively and strong apprehension of it, than we can have in this world. Their torments will give them an *impression* of it.-----A man in his present state, without any enlargement of his capacity, would have a vastly more lively impression of eternity than he has, if he were only under some pretty sharp pain, in some member of his body, and were at the same time assured, that he must endure that pain forever. His pain would give him a greater sense of eternity, than other men have. How much more will those excruciating torments, which the damned will suffer, have this effect !

BESIDE, their capacity will probably be enlarged, their understandings will be quicker and stronger, in a future state; and God can give them as great a sense and as strong an impression of eternity, as he pleases to increase their grief and torment.

O, BE entreated, ye that are in a christless state and are going on in a way to hell, that are daily exposed to damnation, to consider these things. If you do not, it will surely be but a little while, before you will experience them ; and then you will know how dreadful it is, to despair in hell ; and it may be before this year, or this month, or this week, is at an end ; before another sabbath, or ever you shall have opportunity to hear another sermon.

(3.) THAT you may effectually escape these dreadful and eternal torments, be intreated to flee to and embrace him, who came into the world for the very end of saving sinners from these torments, who has paid

paid the whole debt due to the divine law, and exhausted eternal in temporal sufferings. What great encouragement is it to those of you who are sensible that you are exposed to eternal punishment, that there is a Saviour provided, who is able and who freely offers to save you from that punishment, and that in a way which is perfectly consistent with the glory of God, yea which is more to the glory of God, than it would be, if you should suffer the eternal punishment of hell. For if you should suffer that punishment, you would never pay the whole of the debt. Those who are sent to hell, never will have paid the whole of the debt which they owe to God, nor indeed a part which bears any proportion to the whole. They never will have paid a part, which bears so great a proportion to the whole, as one mite, to ten thousand talents. Justice therefore never can be actually satisfied in your damnation; but it is actually satisfied in CHRIST. Therefore he is accepted of the Father, and therefore all who believe, are accepted and justified in him. Therefore believe in him, come to him, commit your souls to him, to be saved by him. In him you shall be safe from the eternal torments of hell. Nor is that all: but thro' him you shall inherit inconceivable blessedness and glory, which will be of equal duration with the torments of hell. For at the last day, the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, so shall the righteous, or those who trust in CHRIST, go into life eternal.

S E R M O N * XII.

The Peace which CHRIST gives his true Followers.

J O H N, xiv. 27.

Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you : not as the World giveth, give I unto you.

TH E S E words are a part of a most affectionate and affecting discourse that CHRIST had with his disciples, the same evening in which he was betray'd; knowing that he was to be crucified the next day. This discourse begins with the 31st verse of the xiii chapter, and is continued to the end of the xvi chapter. CHRIST began his discourse, after he had partook of the passover with them, after he had instituted and administered the sacrament of the supper, and after Judas was gone out, and none were left but his true and faithful disciples; whom he now addresses as his dear children. This was the last discourse that ever CHRIST had with them before his death. As it was his parting discourse, and as it were his dying discourse, so it is on many accounts the most remarkable of all the discourses of CHRIST, which we have recorded in our bibles.

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* DATED AUGUST 1750.

It is evident this discourse made a deep impression on the minds of the disciples; and we may suppose that it did so, in a special manner, on the mind of John the beloved disciple, whose heart was especially full of love to him, and who had just then been leaning on his bosom. In this discourse CHRIST had told his dear disciples that he was going away, which filled them with sorrow and heaviness. The words of the text are some of the words which CHRIST said to comfort them, and to relieve their sorrow. He supports them with the promise of that peace which he would leave with them, and which they would have in him and with him, when he was gone.

THIS promise he delivers in three emphatical expressions which illustrate one another. "Peace I leave with you." As much as to say, though I am going away, yet I will not take all comfort away with me. While I have been with you, I have been your support and comfort, and you have had peace in me, in the midst of the losses you have sustained and troubles you have met with in this evil generation. This peace I will not take from you, but leave it with you with great advantage, and in a more full possession.

"My peace I give unto you." CHRIST by calling it *his* peace signifies two things.

1. THAT it was his own, that which he had to give. It was the peculiar benefit that he had to bestow on his children; now he was about to die and leave the world as to his human presence. Silver and gold he had none: for while in his estate of humiliation he was poor. The foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests: but the son of man had not where to lay his head. Luke ix. 58. He had no earthly estate to leave to his disciples who were as it were his family: but he had peace to give them.

2. It

1. It was his peace that he gave them; as it was the same kind of peace which he himself enjoyed. The same excellent and divine peace which he ever had in God; and which he was about to receive in his exalted state in a vastly greater perfection and fullness: for the happiness CHRIST gives to his people, is a participation of his own happiness: agreeable to what CHRIST says in this same dying discourse of his, chapter xv. 11. "These things have I said unto you that my joy might remain in you." And in his prayer that he made with his disciples at the conclusion of this discourse. Chapter xvii. 13. "And now come I unto thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." and verse 22. "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them."

CHRIST here alludes to men's making their wills before death. When parents are about to leave their children by death, they are wont in their last will and testament to give them their estate. That estate which they themselves were wont to possess and enjoy. So it was with CHRIST when he was about to leave the world, with respect to the peace which he gave his disciples; only with this difference, that earthly parents, when they die, though they leave the same estate to their children which they themselves heretofore enjoyed; yet when the children come to the full possession of it, they enjoy it no more; the parents do not enjoy it with their children. The time of the full possession of parents and children is not together. Whereas with respect to CHRIST's peace he did not only possess it himself before his death, when he bequeathed it to his disciples; but also afterwards more fully: so that they were received to possess it with

THE third and last expression is, "*not as the world giveth, give I unto you,*" Which is as much as to say, my gifts and legacies, now I am going to leave the world, are not like those which the rich and great men of the world are wont to leave to their heirs, when they die. They bequeath to their children their worldly possessions; and it may be, vast treasures of silver and gold, and sometimes an earthly kingdom. But the thing that I give you, is my peace, a vastly different thing from what they are wont to give, and which cannot be obtained by all that they can bestow, or their children inherit from them.

DOCTRINE. THAT peace which CHRIST, when he died, left as a legacy to all his true saints, is very diverse from all those things, which the men of this world bequeath to their children, when they die.

I. CHRIST at his death made over the blessings of the new-covenant to believers, as it were in a will or testament.

II. A GREAT blessing that CHRIST made over to believers in this his testament was his peace.

III. THIS legacy of CHRIST is exceeding diverse from all that any of the men of this world ever leave to their children, when they die.

I. CHRIST at his death made over the blessings of the new covenant to believers, as it were in a will or testament.

THE new covenant is represented by the apostle CHRIST's last will and testament. Heb. ix. 15,

"And for this cause he is mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator."

"tor." What men convey by their will or testament, is their own estate. So CHRIST in the new covenant conveys to believers his own inheritance, so far as they are capable of possessing and enjoying it. They have that eternal life given to them in their measure, which CHRIST himself possesses. They live in him, and with him, and by a participation of his life. *Because he lives they live also.* They inherit his kingdom: the same kingdom which the father appointed unto him. Luke xxii. 29. "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my father hath appointed unto me." They shall reign on his throne, Rev. iii. 21. They have his glory given to them. John xvii. And because all things are CHRIST's, so in CHRIST all things are also the saints 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.

MEN in their wills or testaments, most commonly give their estates to their children. So believers are in scripture represented as CHRIST's children. Heb. ii. 13. "Behold, I, and the children which God hath given me." Men most commonly make their wills a little before their death: so CHRIST did in a very special and solemn manner, make over and confirm to his disciples the blessings of the new covenant, on the evening before the day of his crucifixion, in that discourse of which my text is a part. The promises of the new covenant were never so particularly expressed, and so solemnly given forth by CHRIST in all the time that he was upon earth, as in this discourse. CHRIST promises them mansions in his fathers house chapter xiv. 1, 2, 3. Here he promises them whatever blessings they should need and ask in his name. Chapter xv. 7. xvi. 23, 24. Here he does more solemnly and fully than any where else, give forth and confirm the promise of the HOLY SPIRIT, which is the sum of the blessing,

blessings of the covenant of grace. Chap. xiv. 16.--- xvii. 26.--- xv. 25.--- xvi. 7. Here he promises them his own and his father's gracious presence and favor, Chapter xiv. 18.--- xix. 20, 21. Here he promises them peace in the text. Here he promises them his joy. Chapter xv. 11. Here he promises grace to bring forth holy fruits--- Chapter xv. 11. And victory over the world. Chapter xvi. 33. And indeed there seems to be no where else so full and compleat an edition of the covenant of grace in the whole bible, as in this dying discourse of CHRIST with his eleven true disciples.

THIS covenant between CHRIST and his children is like a will or testament also in this respect, that it becomes effectual, and a way is made for putting it in execution no other way than by his death ; as the apostle observes it is with a will or testament among men. For a testament is of force after men are dead. Heb. ix. 17. For though the covenant of grace indeed was of force before the death of CHRIST, yet it was of force no other wise than by his death ; so that his death then did virtually intervene ; being already undertaken and engaged. As a man's heirs come by the legacies bequeathed to them, no otherwise than by the death of the testator, so men come by the spiritual and eternal inheritance, no otherwise than by the death of CHRIST. If it had not been for the death of CHRIST they never could have obtained it.

II. A GREAT blessing that CHRIST in his testament hath bequeathed to his true followers is his peace. Here are two things that I would observe particularly, viz. That CHRIST hath bequeathed to believers *true* peace ; and then that the peace he has given them is *his* peace.

I. OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST has bequeathed true
peace

peace and comfort to his followers. CHRIST is called the prince of peace. *Isai ix. 6.* And when he was born into the world, the angels on that joyful and wonderful occasion sang glory to God in the highest, on earth *peace*; because of that peace which he should procure for and bestow on the children of men; Peace with God, and peace one with another, and tranquility and peace within themselves: which last is especially the benefit spoken of in the text. This CHRIST has procured for his followers and laid a foundation for their enjoyment of, in that he has procured for them the other two, viz, peace with God, and one with another. He has procured for them peace and reconciliation with God and his favor and friendship; in that he satisfied for their sins, and laid a foundation for the perfect removal of the guilt of sin, and the forgiveness of all their trespasses, and wrought out for them a perfect and glorious righteousness, most acceptable to God and sufficient to recommend them to God's full acceptance and to the adoption of children, and to the eternal fruits of his fatherly kindness.

By these means true saints are brought into a state of freedom from condemnation, and all the curses of the law of God. *Rom. viii. 34.* "Who is he that condemneth?" And by these means they are safe from that dreadful and eternal misery which naturally they are exposed to, and are set on high out of the reach of all their enemies, so that the gates of hell and powers of darkness can never destroy them; nor can wicked men, tho' they may persecute them, ever hurt them. *Rom. viii. 31.* "If God be for us, who can be against us?" *Num. xxiii, 8.* "How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed." *verse 23.* "There is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any

"any divination against Israel." By these means they are out of reach of death, John. vi, 4---ix, 50, 51.

"This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." By these means death with respect to them has lost its sting, and is no more worthy of the name of death 1 Cor. xv. 55. "O death where is thy sting?" By these means they have no need to be afraid of the day of judgment when the heavens and earth shall be dissolved. Ps. xlv. 1, 2. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." Yea a true saint has reason to be at rest in an assurance, that nothing can separate him from the love of God. Rom. viii. 38, 39.

Thus he that is got into CHRIST is in a safe refuge from every thing that might disturb him; for this is that man spoken of Isa. xxxii, 2. "And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." And hence they that dwell in CHRIST have that promise fulfilled to them which we have in the 18th verse of the same chapter; "And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."

And the true followers of CHRIST have not only ground of rest and peace of soul by reason of their safety from evil, but on account of their sure title and certain enjoyment of all that good which they stand in need of, living, dying and throughout all eternity. They are on a sure foundation for happiness, are built on a rock that can never be moved, and have a fountain that is sufficient and can never be exhausted.

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The covenant is order'd in all things and sure, and God has pass'd his word and oath, "that by two, immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." The infinite Jehovah is become their God, who can do every thing for them. He is their portion who has an infinite fulness of good in himself. "He is their shield and exceeding great reward." As great a good is made over to them as they desire or can desire or conceive of: yea as great and as sweet as they are capable of; and to be continued as long as they desire; and this is made as sure as they can desire: Therefore they have reason to put their hearts at rest, and be at peace in their minds.

BESIDES he has bequeathed peace to the souls of his people, as he has procured for them and made over to them, the spirit of grace and true holiness; which has a natural tendency to the peace and quietness of the soul. It has such a tendency as it implies a discovery and relish of a suitable and sufficient good. It brings a person into a view of divine beauty and to a relish of that good which is a man's proper happiness; and so it brings the soul to its true centre? The soul by this means is brought to rest, and ceases from restlessly inquiring, as others do, who will shew us any good; and wandering to and fro like lost sheep seeking rest and finding none. The soul hath found him who is as the apple tree among the trees of the wood, and sits down under his shadow with great delight and his fruit is sweet unto his taste. Cant. ii. 2. And thus is that saying of CHRIST fulfilled. John iv. 14. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." And besides true grace naturally tends to peace and quietness as it settles things in the

soul in their due order, sets reason on the throne and subjects the senses and affections to its government, which before were uppermost and put all things into confusion and uproar in the soul. Grace tends to tranquility as it mortifies tumultuous desires and passions; subdues the eager and insatiable appetites of the sensual nature and greediness after the vanities of the world. It mortifies such principles as hatred, variance, emulation; wrath envyings and the like; which are a continual source of inward uneasiness and perturbation; and supplies those sweet, calming and quieting principles of humility; meekness, resignation, patience, gentleness, forgiveness, and sweet reliance on God. It also tends to peace as it fixes the aim of the soul to a certain end; so that the soul is no longer distracted and drawn contrary ways by opposite ends to be sought, and opposite portions to be obtained, and many masters of contrary wills and commands to be served; but the heart is fixed in the choice of one certain, sufficient and unfailing good: and the soul's aim at this, and hope of it, is like an anchor to it, that keeps it steadfast that it should no more be driven to and fro by every wind.

2. THIS peace which CHRIST has left as a legacy to his true followers, is *his* peace. It is the peace which himself enjoys. This is what I take to be that which is principally intended in the expression. It is the peace that he enjoyed while on earth, in his state of humiliation; though he was a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief, and was every where hated and persecuted by men and devils; and had no place of rest in this world; yet in God his father he had peace. We read of his rejoicing in spirit Luke x. 21. So CHRIST's true disciples, though in the world they have tribulation, yet in God have peace.

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WHEN CHRIST had finished his labours and sufferings and rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven; then he entered into his rest, and into a state of most blessed perfect and everlasting peace: delivered by his own sufferings from our imputed guilt, acquitted and justified of the father on his resurrection; having obtained a perfect victory over all his enemies; was received of his father into heaven, the rest which he had prepared for him, there to enjoy his hearts desire fully and perfectly to all eternity. And then were those words in the six first verses of the 21st Psalm, which have respect to CHRIST, fulfilled. This peace and rest of the Messiah is doubtless exceeding glorious, Isai. xi. 19. "And his rest shall be glorious." This rest is what CHRIST has procured not only for himself, but also his people, by his death; and has bequeathed it to them that they may enjoy it with him, imperfectly in this world and perfectly and eternally in another world.

THAT peace, which has been described, which believers enjoy, is a participation of the peace which their glorious Lord and master himself enjoys, by virtue of the same blood of CHRIST, by which CHRIST himself has entered into rest; it is in a participation of this same justification: for believers are justified with CHRIST. As he was justified when he rose from the dead, and as he was made free from our guilt which he had as our surety; so believers are justified in him and through him. It is as being accepted of God in the same righteousness: It is in the favour of the same God and heavenly father, that they enjoy peace. "I ascend to my father and your father, to my God and your God." It is in a participation of the same spirit; for believers have the spirit of CHRIST. He had the spirit given to him not by measure,

measure, and of his fulness do they all receive and grace for grace. As the oil poured on the head of Aaron went down to the skirts of his garments, so the spirit poured on CHRIST the head, descends to all his members. It is as partaking of the same grace of the spirit, that believers enjoy this peace : John i. 16.

It is as being united to CHRIST and living by a participation of his life, as a branch lives by the life of the vine. It is as partaking of the same love of God ; John xvii. 26. " That the love wherewith " thou hast loved me may be in them."-----It is as having a part with him in his victory over the same enemies : and also as having an interest in the same kind of eternal rest and peace. Eph. ii. 5, 6. " Ever " when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us to " gether with CHRIST,-----and hath raised us up to " gether, and hath made us sit together in heavenly " places."

III. THIS legacy of CHRIST to his true disciples is very diverse from all that the men of this world ever leave to their children, when they die. The men of this world, many of them, when they come to die, have great estates to bequeath to their children, an abundance of the good things of this world, large tracts of ground perhaps in a fruitful soil, covered with flocks and herds. They sometimes leave to their children stately mansions and vast treasure of silver, gold, jewels and precious things, fetched from both the Indies, and from every side of the globe of the earth. They leave them wherewith to live in much state and magnificence and make great show among men, to fare very sumptuously and swim in worldly pleasures. Some have crowns, scepters and palaces, and great monarchies to leave to their heirs. But none of these things are to be com-

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pared to that blessed peace of CHRIST which he has bequeathed to his true followers. These things are such as God commonly in his providence gives his worst enemies, those whom he hates and despises most. But CHRIST's peace is a precious benefit, which he reserves for his peculiar favourites. These worldly things, even the best of them, that the men and princes of the world leave for their children, are things which God in his providence throws out to those whom he looks on as dogs, but CHRIST's peace is the bread of his children. All these earthly things are but empty shadows, which however men set their hearts upon them, are not bread and never can satisfy their souls; but this peace of CHRIST is a truly substantial satisfying food. Itai. lv. 2. None of those things, if men have them to the best advantage and in ever so great abundance, can give true peace and rest to the soul, as is abundantly manifest not only in reason, but experience; it being found in all ages that those who have the most of them, have commonly the least quietness of mind. It is true there may be a kind of quietness, a false peace they may have in their enjoyment of worldly things; men may bless their souls and think themselves the only happy persons and despise others; may say to their souls, as the rich man did, Luke xii. 19. "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry." But CHRIST's peace which he gives to his true disciples, vastly differs from this peace, that men may have in the enjoyments of the world, in the following respects:

1. CHRIST's peace is a reasonable peace and rest of soul; it is what has its foundation in light and knowledge in the proper exercises of reason, and a right view of things; whereas the peace of the world is

is founded in blindness and delusion. The peace that the people of CHRIST have, arises from their having their eyes open and seeing things as they be. The more they consider, and the more they know of the truth and reality of things; the more they know what is true concerning themselves, the state and condition they are in; the more they know of God, and the more certain they are that there is a God, and the more they know what manner of being he is; the more certain they are of another world and future judgment, and of the truth of God's threatenings and promises; the more their consciences are awakened and enlightened, and the brighter and the more searching the light is that they see things in; the more is their peace established. Whereas on the contrary the peace that the men of the world have in their worldly enjoyments, can subsist no otherwise, than by their being kept in ignorance. They must be blindfolded and deceived, otherwise they can have no peace; do but let light in upon their consciences, so that they may look about them and see what they are, and what circumstances they are in, and it will at once destroy all their quietness and comfort. Their peace can live no where but in the dark. Light turns their ease into torment. The more they know what is true concerning God and concerning themselves, the more they are sensible of the truth concerning those enjoyments which they possess, and the more they are sensible what things now are, and what things are like to be hereafter; the more will their calm be turned into a storm. The worldly man's peace can't be maintained but by avoiding consideration and reflection. If he allows himself to think and properly to exercise his reason, it destroys his quietness and comfort. If he would establish his

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earnal peace it concerns him to put out the light of his mind, and turn beast as fast as he can. The faculty of reason if at liberty, proves a mortal enemy to his peace. It concerns him, if he would keep alive his peace, to continue all ways that may be, to stupify his mind and deceive himself, and to imagine things to be otherwise than they be. But with respect to the peace which CHRIST gives, reason is its great friend. The more this faculty is exercised, the more it is established. The more they consider and view things with truth and exactness, the firmer is their comfort and the higher their joy. How vast a difference is there between the peace of a christian and the wordling! How miserable are they who can't enjoy peace any otherwise than by hiding their eyes from the light and confining themselves to darkness; whose peace is properly stupidity; as the ease that a man has, who has taken a dose of stupifying poison, and the ease and pleasure that a drunkard may have, in an house on fire over his head, or the joy of a distracted man in thinking that he is a king, though a miserable wretch confined in Bedlam. Whereas the peace that CHRIST gives his true disciples is the light of life, something of the tranquility of heaven, the peace of the celestial paradise that has the glory of God to lighten it.

2. CHRIST's peace is a virtuous and holy peace. The peace that the men of the world enjoy is vicious; it is a vile stupidity that depraves and debases the mind and makes men brutish. But the peace that the saints enjoy in CHRIST, is not only their comfort, but it is a part of their beauty and dignity. The christian tranquility, rest and joy of real saints, are not only unspeakable privileges, but they are virtues and graces of God's spirit, wherein the image of God

In them does partly consist. This peace has its source in those principles that are in the highest degree virtuous and amiable, such as poverty of spirit, holy resignation, trust in God, divine love, meekness and charity. The exercise of such blessed fruits of the spirit as are spoken of Gal. v. 22, 23.

3. THIS peace greatly differs from that which is enjoyed by the men of the world, with regard to its exquisite sweetness. It is a peace that passes all that natural men enjoy in worldly things so much that it passes their understanding and conception. Phil. iv. 7. It is exquisitely sweet, because it has so firm a foundation as the everlasting rock that never can be moved. It is sweet, because perfectly agreeable to reason. It is sweet, because it rises from holy and divine principles, that as they are the virtue so they are the proper happiness of men.

It is exquisitely sweet because of the greatness of the objective good that the saints enjoy, and have peace and rest in, being no other than the infinite bounty and fullness of that God, who is the fountain of all good. It is sweet on account of the fullness and perfection of that provision that is made for it in CHRIST and the new covenant, where there is a foundation laid for the saints perfect peace; and hereafter they shall actually enjoy perfect peace; and though their peace is not now perfect, it is not owing to any defect in the provision made, but in their own imperfection and misery, sin and darkness; and because as yet they do partly cleave to the world and seek peace from thence, and don't perfectly cleave to CHRIST. But the more they do so, and the more they see of the provision there is made, and accept of it, and cleave to that alone, the nearer are they brought to perfect tranquility. Isai. xxvi. 5.

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4. THE peace of the christian infinitely differs from that of the worldling, in that it is unfailing and eternal peace. That peace which carnal men have in the things of the world, is according to the foundation it is built upon, of short continuance; like the comfort of a dream. 1 Joh. ii. 17. 1 Cor. vii. 31. These things, the best and most durable of them, are like bubbles on the face of the water; they vanish in a moment. Hof. x. 7.

BUT the foundation of the christians peace is everlasting; it is what no time, no change, can destroy. It will remain when the body dies: it will remain when the mountains depart and the hills shall be removed, and when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll. The fountain of his comfort shall never be diminished, and the stream shall never be dried. His comfort and joy is a living spring in the soul, a well of water springing up to everlasting life.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

THE use that I would make of this doctrine, is to improve it as an inducement unto all to forsake the world, no longer seeking peace and rest in its vanities, and to cleave to CHRIST and follow him. Happiness and rest is what all men are in pursuit of. But the things of the world, wherein most men seek it, can never afford it; they are labouring and spending themselves in vain. But CHRIST invites you to come to him, and offers you this peace which he gives his followers, that so much excels all that the world can afford. Isai. lv. 2, 3.

You that have hitherto spent your time in the pursuit of satisfaction and peace in the profit or glory of the world, or in the pleasures and vanities of youth,

youth, you have this day an offer made to you of
 that excellent and everlasting peace and blessedness
 which CHRIST has purchased with the price of his
 own blood, and bestows only on those that are his
 peculiar favourites, his redeemed ones, that are his
 portion and treasure, the objects of his everlasting
 love. As long as you continue to reject those offers
 and invitations of CHRIST and continue in a christless
 condition, you never will enjoy any true peace
 comfort; but in whatever circumstances you are
 you will be miserable; you will be like the prodigal
 that in vain endeavored to fill his belly with the husks
 that the swine did eat: the wrath of God will abide
 upon and misery will attend you wherever you go
 which you never will by any means be able to escape.
 CHRIST gives peace to the most sinful and miserable
 that come to him. He heals the broken in heart and
 bindeth up their wounds. But it is impossible that
 they should have peace, that continue in their sin.
 Isai. lvii. 19, 20, 21. There is no peace between
 God and them; as they have the guilt of sin remain-
 ing in their souls, and are under the dominion of
 so God's indignation continually burns against them,
 and therefore there is reason why they should travail
 pain all their days. While you continue in such a
 state, you live in a state of dreadful uncertainty what
 will become of you, and in continual danger. While
 you are in the enjoyment of things that are the most
 pleasing to you, where your heart is best suited,
 most chearful, yet you are in a state of condemnation
 hanging over the infernal pit, with the sword of
 divine vengeance hanging over your head, having
 security one moment from utter and remediless
 destruction. What reasonable peace can any one expect
in such a state as this; What does it signify to

such an one and clothe him in gorgeous apparel, or
 set him on a throne, or at a prince's table and feed
 him with the rarest dainties the earth affords? and
 how miserable is the ease and cheerfulness that such
 have! what a poor kind of comfort and joy is it,
 that such take in their wealth and pleasures for a mo-
 ment, while they are the prisoners of divine justice,
 and wretched captives of the devil, and have none to
 friend them, or defend them, being without CHRIST;
 aliens from the common wealth of Israel, strangers
 from the covenant of promise, having no hope and
 without God in the world!

I INVITE you now to a better portion. There
 are better things provided for the sinful miserable
 children of men. There is a surer comfort and
 more durable peace. Comfort that you may en-
 joy in a state of safety and on a sure foundation:
 peace and rest that you may enjoy with rea-
 son, and with your eyes open; having all your sins
 forgiven, your greatest and most aggravated trans-
 gressions blotted out as a cloud, and buried as in the
 depths of the sea, that they may never be found more;
 and being not only forgiven but accepted to favor;
 being the objects of God's complacency and delight;
 being taken into God's family and made his children;
 and having good evidence that your names were writ-
 ten on the heart of CHRIST before the world was made,
 and that you have an interest in that covenant of
 grace that is well ordered in all things and sure;
 wherein is promised no less than life and immortality,
 inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, a crown of
 glory that fades not away; being in such circum-
 stances that nothing shall be able to prevent your be-
 ing happy to all eternity; having for the foundation
 of your hope that love of God which is from eterni-
 ty unto eternity; and his promise and oath and his
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omnipotent power, things infinitely firmer than mountains of brass. The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, yea the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, yet these things will never be abolished.

IN such a state as this you will have a foundation of peace and rest through all changes, and in times of the greatest uproar and outward calamity be defended from all storms and dwell above the floods----- Psalm xxxii. 6, 7. and you shall be at peace with every thing and God will make all his creatures throughout all parts of his dominion, to befriend you. Job. v. 19, 24.---You need not be afraid of any thing that your enemies can do unto you. Ps. iii. 5, 6. Those things that now are most terrible to you, viz. death, judgment and eternity, will then be most comfortable, the most sweet and pleasant objects of your contemplation, at least there will be reason that they should be so. Harken therefore to the friendly counsel that is given you this day, turn your feet into the way of peace, forsake the foolish and live; forsake those things which are no other than the devil's baits and seek after this excellent peace and rest of JESUS CHRIST, that peace of God which passes all understanding. Taste and see; never was any disappointed that made a trial. Prov. xxiv. 13, 14. You will not only find those spiritual comforts that CHRIST offers you to be of a surpassing sweetness for the present, but they will be to your soul as the dawning light that shines more and more to the perfect day; and the issue of all will be your arrival in heaven, that land of rest, those regions of everlasting joy, where your peace and happiness will be perfect, without the least mixture of trouble, or affliction, and never be interrupted nor have an end.

S E R.

S E R M O N * XIII.

The Perpetuity and Change of the Sabbath.

I. CORINTHIANS, xvi. 1, 2.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

WE find in the new testament often mentioned a certain collection, which was made by the Grecian churches, for the brethren in Judea, who were reduced to pinching want by a dearth which then prevailed, and was the heavier upon them by reason of their circumstances, they having been from the beginning oppressed and persecuted by the unbelieving Jews.--- We have this collection or contribution twice mentioned in the *Acts*, as in Chap. xi. 28---31; and in Chap. xxiv. 17. It is also taken notice of in several of the epistles; as Rom. xv. 26. and Gal. ii. 10. But it is most largely insisted on, in these two epistles to the Corinthians; in this first epistle, chapter xvi. and in the second epistle chapter viii and ix.---- The apostle

apostle begins the directions, which in this place he delivers concerning this matter, with the words of the text;-----wherein we may observe

1. **WHAT** is the thing to be done concerning which the apostle gives them direction, and that is the making of a collection for the saints; the exercise and manifestation of their charity towards their brethren, by communicating to them, for the supply of their wants; which was by **CHRIST** and his apostles often spoken of and insisted on, as one main duty of the christian religion, and is expressly declared to be so, by the apostle James, chapter i. 27. "Pure religion" and undefiled before God and the father is this, "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction."

2. **WE** may observe the time on which the apostle directs that this should be done, viz. "on the first day of the week." By the inspiration of the Holy Ghost he insists upon it, that it be done on such a particular day of the week, as if no other day would do so well as that, or were so proper and fit a time for such a work.-----Thus, although the inspired apostle was not for making that distinction of days in gospel times, which the Jews made, as appears by Gal. iv. 10. "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years: I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain;" yet here he gives the preference to one day of the week, before any other, for the performance of a certain great duty of christianity.

3. **IT** may be observed that this is the direction, which the apostle had given to other churches that were concerned in the same duty, upon this occasion: he had given direction to them also to do it on the first day of the week: "As I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye." Whence

we may learn that it was nothing peculiar in the circumstances of the Corinthians at Corinth, which was the reason why the Holy Ghost insisted, that they should perform this duty on this day of the week. The apostle had given the like order to the churches of *Galatia*.

Now *Galatia* was far distant from Corinth; the sea parted them; and besides that, there were several other countries between them. Therefore it cannot be thought that the Holy Ghost directs them to this time upon any secular account, having respect to some particular circumstances of the people in that city; but upon a religious account. In giving the preference to this day for such work, before any other day, he has respect to some thing which reached all christians throughout the wide world.

AND by other passages of the new testament, we learn that the case was the same as to other exercises of religion; and that in the age of the apostles, the first day of the week was preferred before any other day, among the primitive christians and in churches immediately under the care of the apostles, for an attendance on the exercises of religion in general. Acts xx. 7. "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them."-----It seems by these things to have been among the primitive christians in the apostles days, with respect to the first day of the week, as it was among the Jews, with respect to the seventh.

WE are taught by CHRIST, that the doing of alms and showing of mercy are proper works for the sabbath day. When the Pharisees found fault with CHRIST for suffering his disciples to pluck the ears of corn and eat on the sabbath. CHRIST corrects them

them with that, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice;" Mat. xii. 7. And CHRIST teaches that works of mercy are proper to be done on the sabbath, in Luke xiii. 15, 16. and xiv. 5.-----These works used to be done on sacred festivals and days of rejoicing, under the old testament, as in Nehemiah's and Esther's time; Neh. viii. 10. and Esth. ix. 19, 22.-----And *Josephus* and *Pbilo*, two very noted Jews, who wrote not long after CHRIST's time, give an account that it was the manner among the Jews on the sabbath, to make collections for sacred and pious uses.

DOCTRINE. It is the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be especially set apart among christians, for religious exercises and duties.

THAT this is the doctrine which the Holy Ghost intended to teach us, by this and from other passages of the new testament, I hope will appear plainly by the sequel. This is a doctrine that we have been generally brought up in by the instructions and examples of our ancestors; and it is and has been the general profession of the christian world, that this day ought to be religiously observed and distinguished from other days of the week. However some deny it. Some refuse to take any notice of the day, or any way to difference it from other days. Others own that it is a laudable custom of the christian church, into which she fell by agreement, and by appointment of her ordinary rulers, to set apart this day for public worship. But they deny any other original to such an observation of the day, than prudential human appointment.-----Others religiously observe the Jewish sabbath, suppose that the institution of that is of perpetual obligation, and that we

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want foundation for determining that that is abrogated, and another day of the week is appointed in the room of the seventh.

ALL these classes of men say, that there is no clear revelation that it is the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be observed as a day to be set apart for religious exercises, in the room of the antient sabbath; which there ought to be, in order to the observation of it by the christian church, as a divine institution. They say, that we ought not to go upon the tradition of past ages, or upon uncertain and far fetched inferences from some passages of the history of the new testament, or upon some obscure and uncertain hints in the apostles writings; but that we ought to expect a plain institution; which, they say, we may conclude God would have given us, if he had designed that the whole christian church, in all ages, should observe another day of the week for an holy sabbath, than that which was appointed of old, by plain and positive institution.

So far is undoubtedly true, that if this be the mind and will of God, he hath not left the matter to human tradition; but hath so revealed his mind about it, in his word, that there is there to be found good and substantial evidence that it is his mind: and doubtless, the revelation is plain enough for them that have ears to hear; that is, for them that will justly exercise their understandings about what God says to them. No christian, therefore, should rest till he has satisfactorily discovered the mind of God in this matter. If the christian sabbath be of divine institution, it is doubtless of great importance to religion, that it be well kept; and therefore, that every christian be well acquainted with the institution.

If men only take it upon trust, and keep the first day of the week only because their parents taught

them so, or because they see others do so, and so they take it for certain, that it is right; they will never be likely to keep it so conscientiously and strictly, as if they had seen with their own eyes, and had been convinced by seeing for themselves, good grounds in the word of God, for their practice: and unless they do see thus for themselves, whenever they are negligent in sanctifying the sabbath, or are guilty of profaning it; their consciences will not have that advantage to smite them for it, as otherwise they would. ---And those who have a sincere desire to obey God in all things, will keep the sabbath more carefully and more chearfully, if they have seen and been convinced, that therein they do what is according to the will and command of God, and what is acceptable to him; and will also have a great deal more comfort in the reflection upon their having carefully and painfully kept the sabbath.

THEREFORE, I design now, by the help of God, to show, that it is sufficiently revealed in the scriptures, to be the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be distinguished, in the christian church, from other days of the week, as a sabbath, to be devoted to religious exercises.

In order to this, I shall here premise, that the mind and will of God, concerning any duty to be performed by us, may be sufficiently revealed in his word, without a particular precept in so many express terms, enjoining it. ---The human understanding is the ear to which the word of God is spoken; and if it be so spoken, that that ear may plainly hear it, it is enough. God is sovereign as to the manner of speaking his mind, whether he will speak it in express terms, or whether he will speak it by saying several other things which imply it, and from which

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we may, by comparing them together, plainly perceive it. If the mind of God be but revealed, if there be but sufficient means for the communication of his mind to our minds, that is sufficient; whether we hear so many express words with our ears, or see them in writing with our eyes; or whether we see the thing that he would signify to us, by the eye of reason and understanding.

Who can positively say, that if it had been the mind of God, that we should keep the first day of the week, he would have commanded it in express terms, as he did the observation of the seventh day of old?---Indeed, if God had so made our faculties, that we were not capable of receiving a revelation of his mind in any other way; then there would have been some reason to say so. But God hath given us such understandings, that we are capable of receiving a revelation, when made in another manner. And if God deals with us agreeably to our natures, and in a way suitable to our capacities, it is enough. If God discovers his mind in any way whatsoever, provided it be according to our faculties, we are obliged to obedience; and God may expect our notice and observance of his revelation, in the same manner as if he had revealed it in express terms.

I SHALL speak upon this subject under these two general propositions:

1. IT is sufficiently clear, that it is the mind of God, that one day of the week should be devoted to rest, and to religious exercises, throughout all ages and nations.

2. IT is sufficiently clear, that under the gospel dispensation, this day is the first day of the week.

1. PROP. IT is sufficiently clear, that it is the mind of God, that one day of the week should be devoted

voted to rest, and to religious exercises, throughout all ages and nations ; and not only among the anti-ent Israelites, till CHRIST came, but even in these gospel times, and among all nations professing Christianity.

I. FROM the consideration of the nature and state of mankind in this world, it is most consonant to human reason, that certain fixed parts of time should be set apart, to be spent by the church wholly in religious exercises, and in the duties of divine worship. It is a duty incumbent on all mankind, in all ages alike, to worship and serve God. His service should be our great business. It becomes us to worship him with the greatest devotion and engagedness of mind ; and therefore to put ourselves, at proper times, in such circumstances, as will most contribute to render our minds entirely devoted to this work, without being diverted or interrupted by other things.

THE state of mankind in this world is such, that we are called to concern ourselves in secular business and affairs, which will necessarily, in a considerable degree, take up the thoughts and engage the attention of the mind. However, some particular persons may be in such circumstances, as to be more free and disengaged ; yet the state of mankind is such, that the bulk of them, in all ages and nations, are called ordinarily to exercise their thoughts about secular affairs, and to follow worldly business, which in it's own nature, is remote from the solemn duties of religion.

It is therefore most meet and suitable, that certain times should be set apart, upon which men should be required to throw by all other concerns, that their minds may be the more freely and entirely engaged in spiritual exercises, in the duties of religion, and in the immediate worship

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It is also suitable that these times should be fixed and settled, that the church may agree therein, and that they should be the same for all, that men may not interrupt one another; but may rather assist one another by mutual example. For example has a great influence in such cases. If there be a time set apart for public rejoicing, and there be a general manifestation of joy, the general example seems to inspire men with a spirit of joy and mirth; one kindles another.----- So, if it be a time of mourning, and there be general appearances and manifestations of sorrow, it naturally affects the mind, it disposes it to depression, it casts a gloom upon it, and does as it were dull and deaden the spirits.---- So, if a certain time be set apart as holy time, for general devotion, and solemn religious exercises, a general example tends to render the spirit serious and solemn.

2. WITHOUT doubt, one proportion of time is better and fitter than another, for this purpose. One proportion is more suitable to the state of mankind, and will have a greater tendency to answer the ends of such times, than another. The times may be too far asunder: I think human reason is sufficient to discover, that it would be too seldom for the purposes of such solemn times, that they should be but once a year. So, I conclude, no body will deny, but that such times may be too near together to agree with the state and necessary affairs of mankind.

THEREFORE, there can be no difficulty in allowing, that some certain proportion of time, whether we can exactly discover it or not, is really fittest and best; and considering all things, considering the end for which

which such times are kept, and the condition, circumstances and necessary affairs of men, and considering what the state of man is, taking one age and nation with another, that one proportion of time is more convenient and suitable, than any other : which God may know and exactly determine, though we, by reason of the scantiness of our understandings, cannot.

As a certain frequency of the returns of these times may be more suitable, than any other, so one length or continuance of the times themselves may be fitter than another, to answer the purposes of such times. If such times, when they come, were to last but an hour, it would not well answer the end ; for then worldly things would crowd too nearly upon sacred exercises, and there would not be that opportunity to get the mind so thoroughly free and disengaged from other things, as there would be, if the times were longer. But they being so short, sacred and profane things would be as it were mixed together.---- Therefore, a certain distance between these times, and a certain continuance of them, when they come, is more proper than others ; which God knows and is able to determine, though perhaps we cannot.

3. It is unreasonable to suppose any other, than that God's working six days, and resting the seventh, and blessing and hallowing it, was to be of general use in determining this matter, and that it is written, that the practice of mankind in general might some way or other be regulated by it. What could be the meaning of God's resting the seventh day, and hallowing and blessing it, which he did, before the giving of the fourth commandment ; unless he hallowed and blessed it with respect to mankind ? For, he did not bless and sanctify it with respect to himself, or to himself and within himself might observe it :

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that is most absurd. And it is unreasonable to suppose that he hallowed it only with respect to the Jews, a particular nation, which rose up above two thousand years after.

So much therefore must be intended by it, that it was his mind, that mankind should, after his example, work six days, and then rest, and hallow or sanctify the next following; and that they should sanctify every seventh day, or that the space between rest and rest, one hallowed time and another, among his creatures here upon earth, should be six days.---- So that it hence appears to be the mind and will of God, that not only the Jews, but men in all nations and ages, should sanctify one day in seven: which is the thing we are endeavouring to prove.

4. THE mind of God in this matter is clearly revealed in the fourth commandment. The will of God is there revealed, not only that the Israelitish nation, but that all nations; should keep every seventh day holy; or, which is the same thing, one day after every six. This command, as well as the rest, is doubtless everlasting and of perpetual obligation, at least, as to the substance of it, as is intimated by its being engraven on the tables of stone. Nor is it to be thought that CHRIST ever abolished any command of the ten; but that there is the complete number ten yet, and will be to the end of the world.

SOME say, that the fourth command is perpetual, but not in its literal sense, not as designing any particular proportion of time to be set apart and devoted to literal rest and religious exercises. They say, that it is abolished in that sense, and stands in force only in a mystical sense, viz. as that weekly rest of the Jews typified spiritual rest in the Christian church. And so, they say, that we under the gospel are not
to

to make any distinction of one day from another, but are to keep all time holy, doing every thing in a spiritual manner.

BUT this is an absurd way of interpreting the command, as it refers to Christians. For if the command be so far abolished, it is entirely abolished. For it is the very design of the command, to fix the time of worship. The first command fixes the object, the second the means, the third the manner, the fourth the time. And, if it stands in force now only as signifying a spiritual, Christian rest, and holy behaviour at all times, it doth not remain as one of the ten commands, but as a summary of all the commands.

THE main *objection* against the perpetuity of this command is, that the duty required is not *moral*. Those laws whose obligation arises from the nature of things, and from the general state and nature of mankind, as well as from God's positive revealed will, are called *moral* laws. Others, whose obligation depends merely upon God's positive and arbitrary institution, are not moral; such as the ceremonial laws, and the precepts of the gospel, about the two sacraments. Now, the objectors say, they will allow all that is moral in the decalogue to be of perpetual obligation. But this command, they say, is not moral.

BUT this objection is weak and insufficient for the purpose, for which it is brought, or to prove that the fourth command, as to the substance of it, is not of perpetual obligation. For,

(1.) If it should be allowed that there is no morality belonging to the command, and that the duty required, is founded merely on arbitrary institution, it cannot therefore be certainly concluded, that the command

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command is not perpetual. We know that there may be commands in force under the gospel, and to the end of the world, which are not moral: such are the institutions of the two sacraments. And why may there not be positive commands in force, in all ages of the church? If positive, arbitrary institutions are in force in gospel times, what is there which concludes, that no positive precept, given before the times of the gospel, can yet continue in force? But,

(2.) As we have observed already, the thing in general, that there should be certain fixed parts of time, set apart to be devoted to religious exercises, is founded in the fitness of the thing, arising from the nature of things, and the nature and universal state of mankind. Therefore, there is as much reason that there should be a command of perpetual and universal obligation about this, as about any other duty whatsoever. For if the thing in general, that there be a time fixed, be founded in the nature of things, there is consequent upon it a necessity, that the time be limited by a command. For there must be a proportion of time fixed, or else the general moral duty cannot be observed.

(3.) THE particular determination of the proportion of time in the fourth commandment, is also founded in the nature of things, only our understandings are not sufficient absolutely to determine it of themselves. We have observed already, that without doubt one proportion of time is in itself fitter than another, and a certain continuance of time fitter than any other, considering the universal state and nature of mankind; which God may see, though our understandings are not perfect enough absolutely to determine it. So that the difference between this command and others, doth not lie in this, that other

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commands

Commands are founded in the fitness of the things themselves, arising from the universal state and nature of mankind, and this not : but only in this, that the fitness of other commands is more obvious to the understandings of men, and they might have seen it of themselves ; but this could not be precisely discovered and positively determined without the assistance of revelation.

So that the command of God, that every seventh day should be devoted to religious exercises, is founded in the universal state and nature of mankind, as well as other commands ; only man's reason is not sufficient, without divine direction, so exactly to determine it : Though perhaps man's reason is sufficient to determine, that it ought not to be much seldomer, nor much oftener than once in seven days.

5. It further confirms it, that it is the mind and will of God, that such a weekly sabbath should for ever be kept, that God appears in his word as laying abundantly more weight on this precept concerning the sabbath, than on any precept of the ceremonial law ; not only by inserting it in the decalogue, and making it one of the ten commands, which were delivered by God with an audible voice, by writing it with his own finger on the tables of stone, which were the work of God in the mount, and by appointing it afterwards to be written on the tables which Moses made : but as the keeping of the weekly sabbath is spoken of by the prophets, as that wherein consists a great part of holiness of life ; and as it is inserted among moral duties, as particularly in Isa. lviii. 13, 14. " If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable, and shalt honor him, not do-

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“ing thine own ways, nor finding^t thine own plea-
 “sure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt
 “thou delight thyself in the LORD, and I will cause
 “thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and
 “feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father;
 “for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.”

6. It is foretold, that this command should be observed in gospel times; as in *Isai. lvi.* at the beginning, where the due observation of the sabbath is spoken of as a great part of holiness of life, and is placed among moral duties. It is also mentioned as a duty that should be most acceptable to God from his people, even where the prophet is speaking of gospel times; as in the foregoing chapter, and in the first verse of this chapter. And, in the 3d and 4th verses, the prophet is speaking of the abolition of the ceremonial law in gospel times, and particularly of that law, which forbids eunuchs to come into the congregation of the LORD. Yet, here the men is pronounced *blest*, *who keeps the sabbath from polluting it*, ver. 2. And even in the very sentence where the eunuchs are spoken of as being free from the ceremonial law, they are spoken of as being yet under obligation to keep the sabbath, and their keeping of it, as that which God lays great weight upon: “For, thus saith the LORD, unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in mine house, and within my walls, a place and a name, better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.”

BESIDES, the strangers spoken of in the 6th and 7th verses, are the Gentiles, that should be called in the times of the gospel, as is evident by the last clause in

in the 7th, and by the 8th verse: "For mine house
 " shall be called an house of prayer *for all people.*
 " The LORD GOD which gathereth the outcasts of
 " Israel, saith, Yet will I gather *others* to him, *besides*
 " *those that are gathered unto him.*" Yet it is repre-
 sented here as *their* duty to keep the sabbath: "Al-
 " so the *sons of the stranger*, that join themselves to
 " the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of
 " the LORD, to be his servants, *every one that keepeth*
 " *the sabbath from polluting it*, and taketh hold of my
 " covenant: *even them will I bring* to my holy
 " mountain, and *make them joyful in my house of prayer.*"

7. A FURTHER argument for the perpetuity of
 the sabbath, we have in Matth. xxiv. 20. "Pray ye
 " that your flight be not in the winter, *neither on the*
 " *sabbath day.*" CHRIST is here speaking of the flight
 of the apostles and other christians out of Jerusalem
 and Judea, just before their final destruction, as is
 manifest by the whole context, and especially by the
 16th verse: "Then let them which be in Judea flee
 " into the mountains." But this final destruction of
 Jerusalem was after the dissolution of the Jewish
 constitution, and after the christian dispensation was
 fully set up. Yet, it is plainly implied in these
 words of our LORD, that even then christians were
 bound to a strict observation of the sabbath.

Thus I have shewn, that it is the will of God, that
 every seventh day be devoted to rest and to religious
 exercises.

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S E R M O N XIV.

The Perpetuity and Change of the Sabbath.

I CORINTHIANS, xvi. 1, 2.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

DOCTRINE. It is the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be especially set apart among christians, for religious exercises and duties.

I PROPOSED to discourse upon this doctrine under two *propositions* : and having already, under the first, endeavoured to prove, that one day of the week is, throughout all ages, to be devoted to religious exercises ; I proceed now to the

II. PROP. That it is the will of God, that under the gospel dispensation, or in the christian church, this day should be the *first* day of the week.

In order to the confirmation of this, let the following things be considered.

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F. THE words of the fourth commandment afford no objection against this being the day that should be the sabbath, any more than against any other day. That this day, which, according to the Jewish reckoning, is the first of the week, should be kept as a sabbath, is no more opposite to any sentence or word of the fourth command, than that the seventh of the week should be the day: and that because the words of the fourth command do not determine which day of the week we should keep as a sabbath; they meerly determine this, that we should rest and keep as a sabbath every seventh day, or one day after every six. It says, *Six days thou shalt labour, and the seventh thou shalt rest*: which implies no more, than that after six days of labour, we shall, upon the next to the sixth, rest and keep it holy. And so, to be sure, we are obliged to do for ever. But the words no way determine where those six days shall begin, and so where the rest or sabbath shall fall. There is no direction in the fourth command how to reckon the time, *i. e.* where to begin and end it. That is not meddled with in the fourth command, but is supposed to be determined otherwise.

THE Jews did not know, by the fourth command, where to begin their six days, and on which particular day to rest; this was determined by another precept. The fourth command does indeed suppose a particular day appointed; but it does not appoint any. It requires us to rest and keep holy a seventh day, one after every six of labour, which particular day God either had or should appoint. The particular day was determined for that nation in another place, *viz.* in Exod. xvi. 23, 25, 26. "And he said, unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, *To-morrow* is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD;

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" LORD : bake that which ye will bake to-day, and
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 " maineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the
 " morning.---And Moses said, Eat that to-day ; for
 " *to-day is a sabbath unto the Lord* : to-day ye shall
 " not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it ;
 " but *the seventh day, which is the sabbath*, in it there
 " shall be none." This is the first place where we
 have any mention made of the sabbath, from the first
 sabbath on which God rested.

It seems, that the Israelites, in the time of their
 bondage in Egypt, had lost the true reckoning of
 time, by the days of the week, reckoning from the
 first day of the creation ; if it had been kept up till
 that time. They were slaves and in cruel bondage,
 and had in a great measure forgotten the true religi-
 on : for we are told, that they served the gods of
 Egypt. And it is not to be supposed, that the Egyp-
 tians would suffer their slaves to rest from their
 work every seventh day. Now, they having re-
 mained in bondage for so long a time, had probably
 lost the weekly reckoning ; therefore, when God had
 brought them out of Egypt into the wilderness, he
 made known to them the sabbath, on the occasion,
 and in the manner recorded in the text just now
 quoted. Hence, we read in Nehemiah, that when
 God had led the children of Israel out of Egypt, &c.
 he made known unto them his holy sabbath ; Neh.
 ix. 14. " And made known unto them thy holy
 " sabbath." To the same effect we read in Ezek.
 xx. 10, 12. " Wherefore, I caused them to go forth
 " out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into
 " the wilderness. Moreover also, I gave them my
 " sabbaths."

BUT they never would have known where the par-
 ticular

particular day would have fallen, by the fourth command. Indeed, the fourth command, as it was spoken to the Jews, did refer to their Jewish sabbath. But that doth not prove, that that day was determined and appointed by it. The precept in the fourth command is to be taken generally of a seventh day, such a seventh day as God should appoint, or had appointed. And because such a particular day had been already appointed for the Jewish church; therefore, as it was spoken to them, it did refer to that particular day. But this doth not prove, but that the same words refer to another appointed seventh day, now in the christian church. The words of the fourth command may oblige the church, under different dispensations, to observe different appointed seventh days, as well as the fifth command may oblige different persons to honor different fathers and mothers.

THE christian sabbath, in the sense of the fourth command, is as much the seventh day, as the Jewish sabbath; because, it is kept every seventh day, as much as that; it is kept after six days of labour, as well as that; it is the seventh, reckoning from the beginning of our first working day, as well as that was the seventh from the beginning of their first working day. All the difference is, that the seven days formerly began from the day after God's rest from the creation, and now they begin the day after that. It is no matter by what names the days are called: if our nation had, for instance, called Wednesday the first of the week, it would have been all one as to this argument.

THEREFORE, by the institution of the christian sabbath, there is no change from the fourth command; but the change is from another law, which determin-

ed the beginning and ending of their working days. So that those words of the fourth command viz. "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God;" afford no objection against that which is called the christian sabbath; for these words remain in full force still. Neither does any just objection arise from these words following, viz. "For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and and hallowed it." These words are not made insignificant to christians, by the institution of the christian sabbath: they still remain in their full force as to that which is principally intended by them. They were designed to give us a reason why we are to work but six days at a time, and then rest on the seventh, because God hath set us the example. And taken so, they remain still in as much force as ever they were. This is the reason still, as much as ever it was, why we may work but six days at a time. What is the reason that christians rest every seventh, and not every eighth, or every ninth, or tenth day? It is because God worked six days and rested the seventh.

It is true, these words did carry something further in their meaning, as they were spoken to the Jews, and to the church before the coming of CHRIST: it was then also intended by them, that the seventh day was to be kept in commemoration of the work of creation. But this is no objection to the supposition, that the words, as they relate to us, do not import all that they did, as they related to the Jews. For there are other words which were written upon those tables of stone, with the ten commandments, which are known

known and allowed not to be of the same import, as they relate to us, which they were of, as they related to the Jews, viz. these words in the preface to the ten commands, "I am the LORD thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."-----These words were written on the tables of stone with the rest, and these words are spoken to us, as well as to the Jews: they are spoken to all, to whom the commandments themselves are spoken, for they are spoken as an enforcement of the commandments. But they do not now remain in all the signification, which they had as they respected the Jews. For we never were brought out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, except in a mystical sense.-----The same may be said of those words which are inserted in the commandments themselves, Deut. v. 15. "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand, and a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day."

So that all the arguments of those, who are against the christian sabbath, drawn from the fourth command, which are all their strength, come to nothing.

2. THAT the antient church was commanded to keep a seventh day in commemoration of the work of creation, is an argument for the keeping of a weekly sabbath in commemoration of the work of redemption, and not any reason against it.

We read in scripture of two creations, the old and the new: and these words of the fourth command, are to be taken as of the same force to those who belong to the new creation, with respect to the new creation, as they were to those who belonged to the old creation, with respect to the old creation. We read
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that "in the beginning God created the heaven, and the earth," and the church of old were to commemorate that work. But when God creates a new heaven and a new earth, those that belong to this new heaven and new earth, by a like reason, are to commemorate the creation of their heaven and earth.

The scriptures teach us to look upon the old creation as destroyed, and as it were annihilated by sin; or, as being reduced to a chaos again, without form and void, as it was at first. Jerem. iv. 22, 23. "They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. And I beheld the earth, and low it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light:" *i. e.* they were reduced to the same state in which they were at first; the earth was without form and void, and there was no light, but darkness was upon the face of the deep.

The scriptures further teach us to call the gospel restoration and redemption, a creation of a new heaven and a new earth; Isai. lxv. 17, 18. "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for behold I create *Jerusalem* a rejoicing and *her people* a joy." And Isai. li. 16. "And I have put my words in thy mouth, and have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens and lay the foundation of the earth, and say unto *Zion*, *Thou art my people.*" And chap. lxvi. 22. "For as the new heavens, and the new earth which I shall make &c." --- In these places we are not only told of a new creation, or new heavens and a new earth; but we are told what is meant by it, viz. The gospel renovation, the making of *Jerusalem* a rejoicing, and *her people* a joy; saying unto *Zion*, "Thou art my people, &c." The prophet
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in all these places is prophesying of the gospel redemption.

THE gospel state is every where spoken of as a renewed state of things, *wherein old things are passed away, and all things become new*: We are said to be *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*; all things are *renewed and reconciled whether in heaven or in earth*, and God hath *caused light to shine out of darkness*, as he did at the beginning; and the dissolution of the Jewish state was often spoken of in the old testament, as the end of the world.-----But we who belong to the gospel church, belong to the new creation, and therefore there seems to be at least as much reason, that we should commemorate the work of this creation, as that the members of the antient Jewish church should commemorate the work of the old creation.

3. THERE is another thing which confirms it, that the fourth command reaches God's resting from the new creation, as well as from the old; which is, that the scriptures do expressly speak of the one, as parallel with the other, *i. e.* CHRIST's resting from the work of redemption, is expressly spoken of as being parallel with God's resting from the work of creation, as in Heb. iv. 10. "For he that is entered in-
" to his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works,
" as God did from his."

NOW CHRIST rested from his works, when he rose from the dead, on the first day of the week. When he rose from the dead, then he finished his work of redemption; his humiliation was then at an end; he then rested and was refreshed.----When it is said in this place, "There remaineth a rest to the people of
" of God," in the original it is, a *sabbatism*, or *the keeping of a sabbath*: And this reason is given for it,
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“ed from his own works, as God did from his.” These three things at least we are taught by these words :

(1.) WE are taught by them to look upon CHRIST’s rest from his work of redemption, as parallel with GOD’s rest from the work of creation ; for they are expressly compared together, as parallel one with the other.

(2.) THEY are spoken of as parallel, particularly in this respect, *viz.* The relation which they both have to the keeping of a sabbath among GOD’s people, or with respect to the influence which these two rests have, as to *sabbatizing* in the church of GOD : for it is expressly with respect to this, that they are compared together. Here is an evident reference to GOD’s blessing and hallowing the day of his rest from the creation to be a sabbath, and appointing a sabbath of rest in imitation of him. For the apostle is speaking of this, ver. 4. “ For he spake in a certain “ place of the seventh day on this wise, And GOD “ did rest the seventh day from all his works.” Thus far is evident ; whatever the apostle has respect to by this keeping of a sabbath by the people of GOD, whether it be a weekly sabbatizing on earth, or a sabbatizing in heaven.

(3.) IT is evident, in these words, that the preference is given to the latter rest, *viz.* the rest of our SAVIOUR from his works, with respect to the influence it should have, or relation it bears, to the sabbatizing of the people of GOD, now under the gospel, evidently implied in the expression, “ There remaineth therefore a sabbatism to the people of GOD. “ For he that entered into his rest, &c.” For, in this expression, *There remaineth*, it is intimated, that the old sabbatism appointed in remembrance of GOD’s rest

rest from the work of creation, doth not remain, but ceases; and that this new rest, in commemoration of CHRIST's resting from his works, remains in the room of it.

4. THE Holy Ghost hath implicitly told us, that the sabbath which was instituted in commemoration of the old creation, should not be kept in gospel times, in *Isai. lxxv. 17, 18.* There we are told, that when GOD should create new heavens and a new earth, the former should not be remembered nor come into mind. If this be so, it is not to be supposed that we are to keep a seventh part of time, on purpose to remember it and call it to mind.

LET us understand this which way we will, it will not be well consistent with the keeping of one day in seven, in the gospel church, principally for the remembrance and calling to mind of the old creation. If the meaning of the place be only this, that the old creation shall not be remembered nor come into mind in comparison with the new, and that the new will be so much more remarkable and glorious, and will so much more nearly concern us, that so much more notice will be taken of it, and it will be thought so much more worthy to be remembered and commemorated, that the other will be forgotten, will not be remembered, nor come into mind: If we understand it thus, it is impossible that it should be more to our purpose. For then hereby the Holy Ghost teaches us, that the christian church has much more reason to commemorate the new creation than the old; in so much that the old is worthy to be forgotten in comparison with it.

AND, as the old creation was no more to be remembered, nor come into mind, so in the following verse the church is directed for ever to commemorate the new creation;

cretion: "But be you glad and rejoice for ever in
 "that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusa-
 "lem a rejoicing and her people a joy." *i. e.* Tho'
 you forgot the old, yet for ever to the end of the
 world, keep a joyful remembrance of the new crea-
 tion.

5. It is an argument that the Jewish sabbath was
 not to be perpetual, that the Jews were commanded
 to keep it in remembrance of their deliverance out of
 Egypt. One reason why it was instituted was, be-
 cause God thus delivered them, as we are expressly
 told in the decalogue itself, in one of the places where
 we have it recorded in the books of Moses; Deut.
 v. 15. "And remember that thou wast a servant in the
 "land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought
 "thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a
 "stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God
 "commanded thee to keep the sabbath day."-----
 Now, can any person think, that God would have
 all nations under the gospel and to the end of the
 world, keep a day every week, which was instituted
 in remembrance of the deliverance of the Jews out of
 Egypt?

6. THE Holy Ghost hath implicitly told us, that
 instituted memorials of the Jews deliverance from
 Egypt should be no longer upheld in gospel times,
 as in Isai. xvi. 14, 15. The Holy Ghost speaking
 there of gospel times, says, "Therefore behold the
 "days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more
 "be said, The LORD liveth that brought up the
 "children of Israel out of Egypt; but the LORD
 "liveth that brought up the children of Israel from
 "the land of the north, and from all the lands whi-
 "ther he had driven them; and I will bring them
 "again into their own land." *They shall no more say,*
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The Lord liveth that brought; &c. i. e. at least they shall keep up no more any public memorials of it.

If there be a sabbath kept up in gospel times, as we have shown there must be, it is more just from these words to suppose that it should be as a memorial of that which is spoken of in the latter verse, *the bringing up of the children of Israel from the land of the north*; that is, the redemption of CHRIST; and his bringing home the elect, not only from Judea, but from the north and from all quarters of the world. See *Isai. xliii. 16--20.*

7. It is no more than just to suppose, that God intended to intimate to us, that the sabbath ought by christians to be kept in commemoration of CHRIST's redemption, in that the Israelites were commanded to keep it in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt; because, that deliverance out of Egypt is an evident, known and allowed type of it. It was contrived and ordered of God, on purpose to represent it; every thing about that deliverance was typical of this redemption, and much is made of it principally for this reason, because it is so remarkable a type of CHRIST's redemption. And it was but a shadow, the work in itself, was nothing in comparison with the work of redemption. What is a petty redemption of one nation from a temporal bondage, to the eternal salvation of the whole church of the elect in all ages and nations, from eternal damnation, and the introduction of them, not into a temporal Canaan, but into heaven, into eternal glory and blessedness? Was that shadow so much to be commemorated, as that a day once a week, was to be kept on the account of it; and shall not we much more commemorate that great and glorious work, of which it was designed on purpose to be a shadow?

Besides,

Bestows, the words in the fourth commandment, which speak of the deliverance out of Egypt, can be of no significancy unto us, unless they are to be interpreted of the gospel redemption: but the words of the decalogue are spoken to all nations and ages. Therefore, as the words were spoken to the Jews they referred to the type or shadow; as they are spoken to us they are to be interpreted of the antitype and substance. For the Egypt from which we under the gospel are redeemed, is the spiritual Egypt; the house of bondage from which we are redeemed, is a state of spiritual bondage.--- Therefore the words as spoken to us, are to be thus interpreted, Remember, thou wast a servant to sin and satan, and the LORD thy God delivered thee from this bondage with a mighty hand and outstretched arm; therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

As the words in the preface to the ten commandments, about the bringing of the children of Israel out of Egypt, are interpreted in our catechism, and as they have respect to us, must be interpreted of our spiritual redemption, so by an exact identity of reason, must these words in Deuteronomy, annexed to the fourth command be interpreted of the same gospel redemption.

THE Jewish sabbath was kept on the day that the children of Israel came up out of the red sea. For, we are told in Deut. v. 15. That this holy rest of the sabbath was appointed in commemoration of their coming up out of Egypt. But the day of their going through the red sea was the day of their coming up out of Egypt; for till then they were in the land of Egypt. The red sea was the boundary of the land of Egypt.--- The scripture itself tells us that

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that day on which they sung the song of Moses, was the day of their coming up out of the land of Egypt; Hosea ii. 15. "And she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt;" referring plainly to that triumphant song which Moses and the children of Israel sang, when they came up out of the red sea.

THE scripture tells us, that God appointed the Jewish sabbath in commemoration of the deliverance of the children of Israel from their task-masters, the Egyptians, and of their rest from their hard bondage and slavery under them; Deut. v. 14, 15. "That thy man-servant and maid servant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day."---But the day that the children of Israel were delivered from their task-masters and had rest from them, was the day when the children of Israel came up out of the red sea. They had no rest from them till then. For though they were before come forth on their journey to go out of the land of Egypt; yet they were pursued by the Egyptians, and were exceedingly perplexed and distressed. But on the morning that they came up out of the red sea, they had compleat and final deliverance; then they had full rest from their task-masters. Then God said to them, "The Egyptians which ye have seen this day ye shall see no more for ever;" Exod. xiv. 13. Then they enjoyed a joyful day of rest, a day of refreshment. Then they sang the song of Moses; and on that day was their sabbath of rest.

BUT this coming up of the children of Israel out

of the red sea, was only a type of the resurrection of CHRIST. That people was the mystical body of CHRIST, and Moses was a great type of CHRIST himself; and besides, on that day CHRIST went before the children of Israel in the pillar of cloud and of fire, as their Saviour and Redeemer. On that morning CHRIST, in this pillar of cloud and fire, rose out of the red sea, as out of great waters; which was a type of CHRIST's rising from a state of death and from that great humiliation which he suffered in death.

THE resurrection of CHRIST from the dead, is in scripture represented by his coming up out of deep waters. So it is in CHRIST's resurrection as represented by Jonah's coming out of the sea; Mat. xii: 40. It is also compared to a deliverance out of deep waters in Psalm lxi. 1, 2, 3, and ver. 14, 15.----- These things are spoken of CHRIST, as is evident from this, that many things in this Psalm are in the new testament expressly applied to CHRIST, as you may see by comparing ver. 4. with Joh. xv. 25. and ver. 9. with Joh. ii. 17. and ver. 2. with Matth. xxvii. 34, 48. and Mark xv. 23. and Joh. xix. 29. and ver. 22. with Rom. xi. 9, 10, and ver. 25. with Acts i. 20.

THEREFORE it being so, that the Jewish sabbath was appointed on the day on which the pillar of cloud and fire rose out of the red sea, and on which Moses and the church, the mystical body of CHRIST came up out of the same sea, which is a type of the resurrection of CHRIST; it is a great confirmation that the christian sabbath should be kept on the day of the rising of the real body of CHRIST from the grave, which is the antitype. For surely the scriptures have taught us, that the type should give way to the antitype, and that the shadow should give way to the substance,

8. I ARGUE the same thing from Psalm cxviii. 22, 23, 24. There we are taught, that the day of CHRIST's resurrection is to be celebrated with holy joy by the church. "The stone which the builders refused, is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD's doing it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it." The stone spoken of is CHRIST; he was refused and rejected by the builders, especially when he was put to death. That making of him the head of the corner spoken of, which is the LORD's doing, and so marvellous in our eyes, is CHRIST's exaltation, which began with his resurrection. While CHRIST lay in the grave, he lay as a stone cast away by the builders. But when God raised him from the dead, then he became the head of the corner. Thus it is evident the apostle interprets it, Acts iv. 10, 11. "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead," &c.-----"This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner."

AND the day on which this was done, we are here taught, that God hath made to be the day of the rejoicing of the church.

9. THE abolition of the Jewish sabbath seems to be intimated by this, that CHRIST, the LORD of the sabbath, lay buried on that day. CHRIST, the author of the world, was the author of that work of creation, of which the Jewish sabbath was the memorial. It was he that worked six days and rested the seventh day from all his works, and was refreshed. Yet he was holden in the chains of death on that day.-----God who created the world, now in his second work of

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of creation, did not follow his own example, if I may so speak ; he did not rest on the same day, but remained imprisoned in the grave on that day, and took another day to rest in.

THE sabbath was a day of rejoicing ; for it was kept in commemoration of God's glorious and gracious works of creation and the redemption out of Egypt. Therefore we are directed to call the sabbath a delight. But it is not a proper day for the church, CHRIST's spouse to rejoice, when CHRIST the bridegroom lies buried in the grave, as CHRIST says, Mat. ix. 15. " That the children of the bride chamber cannot mourn, while the bridegroom is with them. But the time will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them ; then shall they mourn." . . . While CHRIST was holden under the chains of death ; then the bridegroom was taken from them ; then it was a proper time for the spouse to mourn and not rejoice. But when CHRIST rose again, then it was a day of joy, because we are begotten again to a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus CHRIST from the dead.

10. CHRIST hath evidently, on purpose, and design, peculiarly honored the first day of the week, the day on which he rose from the dead, by taking this day of the week from time to time to appear to the apostles, and by taking this day to pour out the Holy Ghost on the apostles, which we read of in the second chapter of Acts : for this was on the first day of the week, being on Pentecost, which was on the first day of the week, as you may see by *Levit. xxiii. 15, 16.* And by pouring out his spirit on the apostle John, and giving him his visions on this day, *Rev. i. 10.* " I was in the spirit on the LORD's day, &c."

Now doubtless CHRIST had his meaning in thus distinguishingly honoring this day.

11. It is evident by the new testament, that this was especially the day of the public worship of the primitive church, by the direction of the apostles. We are told that this was the day that they were wont to come together to break bread: and this they evidently did with the approbation of the apostles, in as much as they preached to them on that day; and therefore doubtless they assembled together by the direction of the apostles. Acts xx. 7. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them."-----So the Holy Ghost was careful that the public contributions should be on this day, in all the churches, rather than on any other day, as appears by our text.

12. This first day of the week is in the new testament called *the Lord's day*; see Rev. i. 10.---Some say, how do we know that that was the first day of the week? Every day is the LORD's day. But it is ridiculous so to talk. For the design of John is to tell us, when he had those visions. And if by the LORD's day is meant any day, how doth that inform us when that event took place?

BUT what is meant by this expression we know, just in the same way as we know what is the meaning of any word in the original of the new testament, or the meaning of any expression in an antient language; viz. by what we find to be the universal signification of the expression in antient times. This expression of *the Lord's day* is found by the antient use of the whole christian church, by what appears in all the writings of antient times, even from the apostles days, to signify the first day of the week.

AND the expression implies in it the holiness of the day. For doubtless the day is called, *the Lord's day*.

as the sacred supper is called *the Lord's supper*, which is so called, because it is an holy supper, to be celebrated in remembrance of the LORD CHRIST, and of his redemption. So this is an holy day to be kept in remembrance of the LORD CHRIST and his redemption.

THE first day of the week being in scripture called the LORD's day, sufficiently makes it out to be the day of the week that is to be kept holy unto God; for God hath been pleased to call it by his own name. When God puts his name upon any thing, or any thing is called by the name of God in scripture, this denotes the business of that thing and the appropriation of it to God.---- Thus God put his name upon his people Israel, of old; Num. vi. 27. "And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel." They were called by the name of God, as it is said, 2 Chron. vii. 14. "If my people which are called *by my name*, &c." *i. e.* They were called God's people, or the LORD's people. This denoted that they were an holy, peculiar people above all others. Deut. vii. 6. "Thou art an holy people unto the LORD"; and so in ver. 14. and many other places.

So the city Jerusalem was a city that was called by God's name; Jer. xxv. 29.----- "Upon the city which is called by my name." Dan. ix. 18, 19. "And the city which is called by thy name, &c." This denoted that that was an holy city, a city chosen of God above all other cities for holy uses, as it is often called *the holy city*, as in Nehem. xi. 1. "To dwell in Jerusalem the holy city;" and in many other places.

So the temple is said to be an house called by God's name; 1 Kings viii. 43. "This house that is called by my name." And often else where. That is,

it was called God's house, or the LORD's house. This denoted that it was called an holy place, an house devoted to holy uses above all others.

So also we find that the first day of the week is called by God's name, being called in scripture God's day, or *the Lord's day*, which denotes that it is an holy day, a day appropriated to holy uses, above all others in the week.

12. THE tradition of the church from age to age, though it be no rule, yet may be a great confirmation of the truth in such a case as this is. We find, by all accounts that it hath been the universal custom of the christian church, in all ages, even from the age of the apostles, to keep the first day of the week. We read in the writings which remain of the first, second, and third centuries, of the christians keeping the LORD's day; and so in all succeeding ages: and there are no accounts that contradict them.----- This day hath all along been kept by christians, in all countries throughout the world, and by almost all that have borne the name of christians, of all denominations, however different in their opinions as to other things.

Now, although this be not sufficient of itself, without a foundation in scripture; yet it may be a confirmation of it, because here is really matter of conviction in it to our reason. Reason may greatly confirm truths revealed in the scriptures. The universality of the custom throughout all christian countries, in all ages, by what account we have of them, is a good argument, that the church had it from the apostles: and it is difficult to conceive how all should come to agree, to set up such a custom through the world, of different sects and opinions, and we have no account of any such thing.

14. IT IS NO WAY WEAKENING TO THESE ARGUMENTS,
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that there is nothing more plainly said about it in the new testament, till John wrote his *Revelation*; because there is a sufficient reason to be given for it. In all probability it was purposely avoided by the Holy Spirit, in the first settling of christian churches in the world, both among the heathen, and among the Jews, but especially for the sake of the Jews and out of tenderness to the Jewish christians. For it is evident that CHRIST and the apostles declared one thing after another to them gradually as they could bear it.

THE Jews had a regard for their sabbath above almost any thing in the law of Moses; and there was that in the old testament which tended to uphold them in the observance of this, much more strongly, than any thing else that was Jewish. God had made so much of it, had so solemnly, frequently, and carefully commanded it, and had often so dreadfully punished the breach of it, that there was more colour for their retaining this custom, than almost any other.

THEREFORE CHRIST dealt very tenderly with them in this point. Other things of this nature we find very gradually revealed. CHRIST had many things to say, as we are informed, which yet he said not, because they could not as yet bear them, and gave this reason for it, that it was like putting new wine into old bottles. They were so contrary to their old customs, that CHRIST was gradual in revealing them. He gave here a little and there a little, as they could bear; and it was a long time before he told them plainly the principal doctrines of the kingdom of heaven.-----He took the most favourable opportunities to tell them of his sufferings and death, especially when they were full of admiration at some sig-

nal miracle, and were confirmed in it, that he was the Messiah.

HE told them many things much more plainly after his resurrection, than before. But even then, he did not tell them all, but left more to be revealed by the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. They therefore were much more enlightened after that, than before. However, as yet he did not reveal all. The abolition of the ceremonial law about meats and drinks was not fully known, till after this.

THE apostles were in the same manner careful and tender of those, to whom they preached and wrote. It was very gradually that they ventured to teach them the cessation of the ceremonial laws of circumcision and abstinence from unclean meats. How tender is the apostle Paul with such as scrupled, in the fourteenth chapter of Romans? He directs those who had knowledge to keep it to themselves, for the sake of their weak brethren. Rom. xiv. 22.---But I need say no more to evince this.

HOWEVER, I will say this, that it is very possible that the apostles themselves at first might not have this change of the day of the sabbath fully revealed to them. The Holy Ghost, at his descent, revealed much to them, yet after that, they were ignorant of much of gospel doctrine; yea, they were so a great while after they acted the part of apostles, in preaching, baptizing, and governing the church. Peter was surprized when he was commanded to eat meats legally unclean; and so were the apostles in general, when Peter was commanded to go to the Gentiles, to preach to them.

THUS tender was CHRIST of the church, while an infant. He did not feed them with strong meat, but was careful to bring in the observation of the LORD's day.

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day by degrees, and therefore took all occasions to honor it, by appearing from time to time of choice on that day, by sending down his spirit on that day in that remarkable manner at Pentecost; by ordering christians to meet in order to break bread on that day, and by ordering their contributions and other duties of worship to be holden on it; thus introducing the observation of it by degrees.-----And though as yet the Holy Ghost did not speak very plainly about it, yet God took special care that there should be sufficient evidences of his will, to be found out by the christian church, when it should be more established and settled, and should have come to the strength of a man.

THUS I leave it with every one to judge, whether there be not sufficient evidence, that it is the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be kept by the christian church, as a sabbath.

S E R;

S E R M O N XV.

The Perpetuity and Change of the Sabbath.

I CORINTHIANS, xvi. 1, 2.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

DOCTRINE. It is the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be especially set apart among christians, for religious exercises and duties.

On this doctrine I have already discoursed, under two propositions, showing *first*, that it is the will of God, that one day of the week, be, in all ages, set apart for religious duties; and *secondly*, that under the gospel, this day ought to be the *first* day of the week. I now proceed to the

A P P L I C A T I O N.

THIS shall be in an use of *exhortation*.

1. LET us be thankful for the institution of the christian sabbath. It is a thing wherein God hath shown

shown his mercy to us, and his care for our souls. He shows, that he, by his infinite wisdom, is contriving for our good, as CHRIST teaches us, that the sabbath was made for man; Mark ii. 27. "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." It was made for the profit and for the comfort of our souls.

THE sabbath is a day of rest: God hath appointed that we should, every seventh day, rest from all our worldly labours. Instead of that, he might have appointed the hardest labours for us to go through, some severe hardships for us to endure,-----It is a day of outward, but especially of spiritual rest. It is a day appointed of God, that his people thereon may find rest unto their souls; that the souls of believers may rest and be refreshed in their Saviour.-----It is a day of rejoicing; God made it to be a joyful day to the church; Psal. cxviii. 24. "This is the day which the LORD hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it." They that aright receive and improve the sabbath, call it *a delight* and *honorable*; it is a pleasant and a joyful day to them. It is an image of the future heavenly rest of the church. Heb. iv. 9, 10, 11. "There remaineth therefore a rest," (or sabbatism as it is in the original) "to the people of God. For he that hath entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest."

THE christian sabbath is one of the most precious enjoyments of the visible church. CHRIST showed his love to his church in instituting it; and it becomes the christian church to be thankful to her LORD for it. The very name of this day, *the Lord's day*, or *Jesus's day*, should endear it to christians, as it intimates the special relation it has to CHRIST, and also the

the design of it, which is the commemoration of our dear Saviour, and his love to his church in redeeming it.

2. Be exhorted to keep this day holy.---Gop hath given such evidences that this is his mind, that he will surely require it of you, if you do not strictly and conscientiously observe it. And if you do thus observe it, you may have this comfort in the reflection upon your conduct, that you have not been superstitious in it, but have done as Gop hath revealed it to be his mind and will in his word, that you should do; and that in so doing you are in the way of God's acceptance and reward.

HERE let me lay before you the following *motives* to excite you to this duty.

(1.) By a strict observation of the sabbath, the name of Gop is honored, and that in such a way as is very acceptable to him. *Isai. lviii. 13.* "If thou call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, and shalt honor him." God is honored by it, as it is a visible manifestation of respect to God's holy law, and a reverencing of that which has a peculiar relation to God himself, and that more in some respects than the observation of many other commands. A man may be just, and may be generous, and yet not so plainly show respect to the revealed mind and will of God, as many of the heathen have been so. But if a person, with evident strictness and care, observe the sabbath, it is a visible manifestation of a conscientious regard to God's declaration of his mind, and so is a visible honor done to his authority.

By a strict observation of the sabbath, the face of religion is kept up in the world. If it were not for the sabbath, there would be but little public and visible appearance of serving, worshipping and reverencing

rencing the supreme and invisible Being. The sabbath seems to have been appointed very much for this end, viz. to uphold the visibility of religion in public, or among professing societies of men; and by how much greater the strictness is with which the sabbath is observed, and with how much more solemnity the duties of it are observed among a people; by so much the greater is the manifestation among them, of respect to the divine Being.

This should be a powerful motive with us to the observation of the sabbath. It should be our study above all things to honor and glorify God. It should be the great thing with all that bear the name of christians, to honor their great God and king; and I hope is a great thing with many that hear me at this time.-----If this be your inquiry, if this be your desire, to honor God; by this subject you are directed to one way whereby you may do much in that way, viz. by honoring the sabbath, and by showing a careful and strict observance of it.

(2.) THAT which is the business of the sabbath is the greatest business of our lives, viz. the business of religion. To serve and worship God is that for which we were made, and for which we had our being given us. Other business, which is of a secular nature, and on which we are wont to attend on week days, is but subordinate, and ought to be subservient to the higher purposes and ends of religion. Therefore surely we should not think much of devoting one seventh part of our time, to be wholly spent in this business, and to be set apart to exercise ourselves in the immediate duties of religion.

(3.) LET it be considered that all our time is God's, and therefore when he challenges of us one day in seven, he challenges his own; he doth not exceed

ceed his right; he would not have exceeded it, if he had challenged a far greater proportion of our time to be spent in his immediate service. But he hath mercifully considered our state, and our necessities here; and, as he hath consulted the good of our souls; in appointing a seventh day for the immediate duties of religion; so he hath considered our outward necessities; and hath allowed us six days for attendance on our outward affairs.-----What unworthy treatment therefore will it be of God, if we refuse to allow him even the seventh day!

(4.) As the sabbath is a day which is especially set apart for religious exercises, so it is a day wherein God especially confers his grace and blessing.-----As God hath commanded us to set it apart to have converse with God; so God hath set it apart for himself to have converse with us. As God hath commanded us to observe the sabbath, so God observes the sabbath too. It is with respect to the sabbath; as Solomon prayed that it might be with respect to the temple, 2 Chron. vi. 20. His eyes are open upon it; he stands ready then especially to hear prayers, to accept of religious services, to meet his people, to manifest himself to them on this day, to give his holy spirit and blessing to those who diligently and conscientiously sanctify it.

THAT we should sanctify the sabbath; as we have observed, is according to God's institution. God in a sense observes his own institutions; *i. e.* is wont to cause them to be attended with a blessing.-----The institutions of God are his appointed means of grace; and with his institutions he hath promised his blessing; **Exod. xx. 24.** "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."

For the same reason may we conclude, that God will
meet

meet his people and bless them, waiting upon him not only in appointed places, but at appointed times, and in all appointed ways. CHRIST hath promised that where two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of them, Mat. xviii. 20. One thing included in the expression, *in his name*, is, that it is by his appointment, and according to his institution.

GOD hath made it our duty, by his institution, to set apart this day for a special seeking of his grace and blessing. From which we may argue, that he will be especially ready to confer his grace on those who thus seek it. If it be the day on which GOD requires us especially to seek him, we may argue, that it is a day on which especially he will be found. That GOD is ready on this day especially to bestow his blessing on them that keep it aright, is implied in that expression, of *GOD's blessing the sabbath day*. GOD hath not only hallowed the sabbath day, but blessed it; he hath given his blessing to it, and will confer his blessing upon all the due observers of it. He hath hallowed it, or appointed that it be kept holy by us, and hath blessed it; he hath determined to give his blessing upon it.

So that here is great encouragement for us to keep holy the sabbath, as we would seek GOD's grace and our own spiritual good. The sabbath day is an accepted time, a day of salvation, a time wherein GOD especially loves to be sought, and loves to be found. The LORD JESUS CHRIST takes delight in his own day; he delights to honor it; he delights to meet with and manifest himself to his disciples on it, as he showed before his ascension, by appearing to them from time to time on this day. On this day he delights to give his holy spirit, as he intimated by choos-

ing it as the day on which to pour out the spirit in so remarkable a manner on the primitive church, and on which to give his spirit to the apostle John.

Of old God blessed the seventh day, or appointed it to be a day whereon especially he would bestow blessings on his people, as an expression of his own joyful remembrance of that day, and of the rest and refreshment which he had on it. *Exod. xxxi. 16, 17.*

“Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath.-----For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh he rested and was refreshed.” As princes give gifts on their birth days, on their marriage days, and the like; so God was wont to dispense spiritual gifts on the seventh day.

BUT how much more reason has CHRIST to bless the day of his resurrection, and to delight to honor it, and to confer his grace and blessed gifts on his people, on this day. It was a day whereon CHRIST rested and was refreshed in a literal sense. It was a day of great refreshment and joy to CHRIST, being the day of his deliverance from the chains of death, the day of his finishing that great and difficult work of redemption, which had been upon his heart from all eternity; the day of his justification by the Father; the day of the beginning of his exaltation, and of the fulfilment of the promises of the Father; the day when he had eternal life, which he had purchased, put into his hands.-----On this day CHRIST doth indeed delight to distribute gifts, and blessings, and joy, and happiness, and will delight to do the same to the end of the world.

O THEREFORE, how well is it worth our while, to improve this day, to call upon God and seek JESUS CHRIST on it!-----Let awakened sinners be stirred up by these things, to improve the sabbath day, as they would

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would lay themselves most in the way of the spirit of God. Improve the sabbath day to call upon God; for then he is near. Improve the sabbath day for reading the holy scriptures, and diligently attending his word preached; for then is the likeliest time to have the spirit accompanying it,----Let the saints who are desirous of growing in grace, and enjoying communion with CHRIST, improve the sabbath in order to it.

(5.) THE last motive which I shall mention, is the experience of the influence, which a strict observation of the sabbath has upon the whole of religion. It may be observed, that in those places where the sabbath is well kept, religion in general will be most flourishing; and that in those places where the sabbath is not much taken notice of, and much is not made of it, there is no great matter of religion any way.

HERE I would give several DIRECTIONS in answer to this.

INQUIRY. How ought we to keep the sabbath?

ANS. I. WE ought to be exceedingly careful on this day to abstain from sin. Indeed, all breaches of the sabbath are sinful; but we speak now of those things which are in themselves sinful, or sinful upon other accounts, besides that they are done upon the sabbath. The sabbath being holy time, it is especially defiled by the commission of sin. Sin by being committed on this day becomes the more exceeding sinful. We are required to abstain from sin at all times, but especially on holy time. The commission of immoralities on the sabbath is the worst way of profaning it, that which most provokes God, and brings most guilt upon the souls of men.

How provoking must it be to God, when men do those things on that day which God has sanctified, and set a part to be spent in the immediate exercises of

of religion, which are not fit to be done on common days, which are impure and wicked whenever they are done !

THEREFORE if any persons be guilty of any such wickedness, as intemperance or any unclean actions, they do in a very horrid manner profane the sabbath. Or if they be guilty of wickedness in speech, of talking profanely, or in an unclean and lascivious manner, or of talking against their neighbours, they do in a dreadful manner profane the sabbath.-----Yet very commonly those who are used to such things on week days, have not a conscience to restrain them on the sabbath. It is well if those that live in the indulgence of the lust of uncleanness on week days, be not some way or other unclean on the sabbath. They will be indulging the same lusts then ; they will be indulging their impure flames in their imaginations at least ; and it is well if they keep clear while in the house of God, and while they pretend to be worshipping God. The unclean young man gives this account of himself, Prov. v. 14. " I was almost in all evil in the " midst of the congregation and the assembly."-----So those who are addicted to an impure way of talking in the week-time, have nothing to keep them from the same upon the sabbath, when they meet together. But dreadfully is God provoked by such things.

WE ought carefully to watch over our own hearts, and to avoid all sinful thoughts on the sabbath. We ought to maintain such a reverence for the sabbath, as to have a peculiar dread of sin, such as shall awe us to a very careful watch over ourselves.

2. WE ought to be careful to abstain from all worldly concerns. The reason as we have showed, why it is needful and proper, that certain stated parts of time should be set apart to be devoted to religious exercises,

exercises, is because the state of mankind is such in this world, that they are necessitated to exercise their minds, and employ their thoughts about secular matters. It is therefore convenient that they should be stated times, wherein all should be obliged to throw by all other concerns, that their minds may the more freely and with less entanglement, be engaged in religious and spiritual exercises.

WE are therefore to do thus, or else we frustrate the very design of the institution of a sabbath. We are strictly to abstain from being outwardly engaged in any worldly thing, either worldly business or recreations. We are to rest in remembrance of God's rest from the work of creation, and of CHRIST'S rest from the work of redemption. We should be careful that we do not encroach upon the sabbath at its beginning, by busying ourselves about the world after the sabbath is begun. We should avoid talking about worldly matters, and even thinking about them; for whether we outwardly concern ourselves with the world or not, yet if our minds be upon it, we frustrate the end of the sabbath. The end of its separation from other days is, that our minds may be disengaged from worldly things; and we are to avoid being outwardly concerned with the world only for this reason, that that cannot be without taking up our minds,----- We ought therefore to give the world no place in our thoughts on the sabbath, but to abstract ourselves from all worldly concernment, and maintain a watch over ourselves, that the world do not encroach, as it is very apt to do. Isai. lviii. 13, 14.

3. WE ought to spend the time in religious exercises. This is the more ultimate end of the sabbath, we are to keep our minds separate from the world, principally for this end, that we may be the more
free

free for religious exercises.-----Though it be a day of rest, yet it was not designed to be a day of idleness : to rest from worldly employments, without employing ourselves about any thing, is but to lay ourselves so much more in the devil's way. The mind will be employed some way or other ; and therefore, doubtless, the end for which we are to call off our minds from worldly things on the sabbath, is that we may employ them about things that are better.

We are to attend on spiritual exercises with the greatest diligence. That it is a day of rest, doth not hinder us in so doing ; for we are to look on spiritual exercises but as the rest and refreshment of the soul. In heaven, where the people of God have the most perfect rest, they are not idle, but are imployed in spiritual and heavenly exercises.----We should take care therefore to employ our minds on a sabbath day, on spiritual objects, by holy meditation ; improving for our help therein, the holy scriptures and other books that are according to the word of God.---We should also employ ourselves outwardly on this day, in the duties of divine worship, in public and private. It is proper to be more frequent and abundant in secret duties on this day, than on other days, as we have time and opportunity ; as well as to attend on public ordinances.

It is proper on this day, not only especially to promote the exercise of religion in ourselves ; but also in others ; to be assisting them, and endeavoring to promote their spiritual good, by religious conversation and conference.---Especially those who have the care of others, ought on this day to endeavour to promote their spiritual good : heads of families should be instructing and counselling their children, and quickening them in the ways of religion, and should

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see to it that the sabbath be strictly kept in their houses. A peculiar blessing may be expected upon those families; where there is due care taken, that the sabbath be strictly and devoutly observed.

4. We are on this day especially to meditate upon and celebrate the work of redemption. We are with special joy to remember the resurrection of CHRIST; because that was the finishing of the work of redemption; and this is the day whereon Christ rested and was refreshed; after he had endured those extreme labours, which he endured for our perishing souls. This was the day of the gladness of CHRIST's heart; it was the day of his deliverance from the chains of death, and also of our deliverance: for we are delivered in him who is our head. He, as it were, rose with his elect. He is the first fruits; those that are CHRIST's will follow. CHRIST, when he rose, was justified as a public person, and we are justified in him. This is the day of our deliverance out of Egypt.

We should therefore meditate on this with joy; we should have a sympathy with CHRIST in his joy. He was refreshed on this day, we should be refreshed as those whose hearts are united with his. When CHRIST rejoices, it becomes all his church every where to rejoice.----- We are to say of this day, "This is the day that the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

BUT we are not only to commemorate the resurrection of CHRIST, but the whole work of redemption; of which this was the finishing. We keep the day on which the work was finished, because it is in remembrance of the whole work.---- We should on this day contemplate the wonderful love of GOD and of CHRIST as expressed in the work of redemption; and our remembrance of these things should be accompanied with suitable exercises of soul with respect to them.

them. When we call to mind the love of CHRIST; it should be with a return of love on our part. When we commemorate this work, it should be with faith in the Saviour. And we should praise God and the Lamb for this work, for the divine glory and love manifested in it, in our private and public prayers, in talking of the wonderful works of God, and in singing divine songs.

Hence it is proper that CHRIST's disciples should choose this day to come together to break bread, or to celebrate the ordinance of the LORD's supper; (Acts xx. 7.) because it is an ordinance instituted in remembrance of the work of redemption.

5. WORKS of mercy and charity are very proper and acceptable to CHRIST, on this day. They were proper on the antient sabbath. CHRIST was wont to do such works on the sabbath-day. But they especially become the christian sabbath, because it is a day kept in commemoration of the greatest work of mercy and love towards us, that ever was wrought. What can be more proper, than that on such a day we should be expressing our love and mercy towards our fellow creatures; and especially our fellow christians. CHRIST loves to see us show our thankfulness to him in such ways as these. Therefore we find, that the Holy Ghost was especially careful, that such works should be performed on the first day of the week, in the primitive church, as we learn by our text.

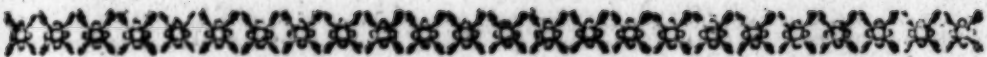


T H E E N D.

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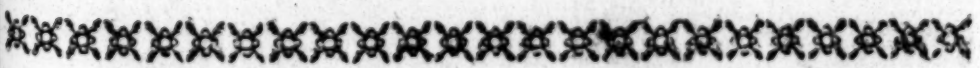
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E R R A T A.

Page.	Line.
8.	ult. <i>for</i> longer, <i>read</i> larger.
9.	1. <i>f.</i> longer, <i>r.</i> larger.
29.	19. <i>f.</i> these, <i>r.</i> those.
31.	33. <i>f.</i> come, <i>r.</i> came.
59.	5. <i>f.</i> him, <i>r.</i> them.
74.	26. <i>f.</i> council, <i>r.</i> counsel.
85.	4. <i>f.</i> come, <i>r.</i> came.
107.	27. <i>f.</i> holted, <i>r.</i> hated.
175.	13. <i>f.</i> safe, <i>r.</i> vouchsafe.
189.	34. <i>f.</i> mids, <i>r.</i> minds.
215.	5. <i>f.</i> continue, <i>r.</i> contrive.
216.	29. <i>f.</i> where, <i>r.</i> when.
224.	18. <i>f.</i> from, <i>r.</i> some.

Several less important Errata, particularly in the Spelling, occasioned by the Editor's distance from the Press are purposely omitted.



E R A T A

1. for longer, read larger.	8.
1. longer, r. finger.	9.
19. there, r. whole.	29.
33. come, r. come.	31.
37. him, r. him.	39.
40. count, r. count.	44.
41. count, r. count.	45.
42. hold, r. hold.	47.
43. late, r. vouchlate.	48.
44. mids, r. mids.	49.
45. continue, r. continue.	51.
47. where, r. when.	52.
48. from, r. from.	54.

Several late important errors, particularly in the
 spelling, occasioned by the Editor's distance from
 the Press are purposely omitted.

